TEESDALE DAY CLUBS
16 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY AND PROCEDURES
ISSUE 02

1. Policy statement

1.1 Teesdale Day Clubs (hereafter referred to as 'us', 'ours', 'we' or 'the charity') recognizes that safeguarding children and young people is a shared responsibility of everyone in our community. We are committed to ensuring that our policy and practice safeguards every child who comes in to contact with us.

1.2 The charity believes that all children and young people have a right to protection from exploitation and abuse. The welfare of children and young people override all other considerations.

1.3 We believe that all children and young people, regardless of age and background, always and in all situations, have the right to enjoy the activities we provide or take part in, in a happy, safe and secure environment.

1.4 A child is defined as someone who is 18 years of age or under.

1.5 This policy applies to anyone who works for us or volunteers with us, including any commissioned contractors, informal or formal partners or third parties we are engaged with.

1.6 Whilst the charity does not provide any direct services for children and young people, we sometimes invite them to take part in activities at our Lunch Clubs, activities, and other events or projects. Sometimes, we may also have young people volunteering with us, although this is not usual.

1.7 We are committed to providing a safe environment for children and young people and creating a culture where they will feel confident about sharing any concerns that they may have about their own safety or the well-being of others.

1.8 We will ensure that safeguarding issues receive continuous attention and safeguarding will be a standing agenda item at all Board of Trustee meetings.

1.9 We will appoint a Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) who will be a lead member of staff. The DSP will be supported by a Safeguarding Lead Trustee Lead (SLT) who will be an appropriately informed and trained Trustee.

1.10 We will regularly review the way that we operate to support this policy statement. The Safeguarding policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or sooner if there are changes in legislation or our service delivery in relation to children or young people.

2. Key principles

2.1 We will rigorously implement this policy.

2.2 As we are an adult service, when not explicitly in the job or role description of a member of staff or volunteer, it will therefore not be usual for a staff member or volunteer to have unsupervised responsibility of a child under 16. However, sometimes a

member of staff may have a supervisory role with a young person aged 16-18 years old.

2.3 All staff and volunteers undertaking supervisory activity with children or young people or undertaking any role which may involve them in regulated activity with children or young people, will be subject to an appropriate DBS check and receive adequate safeguarding training.

2.4 We will always use safer recruitment principles when recruiting volunteers or staff.

2.5 Training in safeguarding will be provided for all volunteers at an appropriate level to their role.

2.6 Employees and volunteers will take safeguarding children seriously and immediately report allegations or suspicions of abuse concerning children and young people to the DSP.

2.7 We will work in partnership with the local authority and all other agencies to enable children and young people to be safe.

2.8 We will ascertain the wishes and feelings of children and young people, and their families, and inform them of their rights and help them put forward their views when this is appropriate.

2.9 We will pay attention to the needs of disabled children who are statistically at an increased risk of abuse and exploitation.

2.10 We will always work in partnership with the families of children and young people and inform them when we need to take any actions and involve the most appropriate agency in taking any actions.

2.11 In considering how children and young people are involved in our activities, and how they participate, we will positively promote their ethnic origin, cultural background, religion, health, gender, sexuality and special needs (see equality and diversity policy).

2.12 We will carry out risk assessments for activities involving children.

2.13 Safeguarding training at an appropriate level will be mandatory for our DSP and STL and must be refreshed regularly or in accordance with local authority guidance.

2.14 Anyone not upholding or adhering to this policy, or to our code of conduct, may be subject to disciplinary action or dismissal.

2.15 Our Whistle Blowing policy will be referenced when a person raises a concern about the misconduct of anyone working for or volunteering with the charity.

2.16 All personal data will be processed in accordance with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

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Designated Persons
Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP): Andrea Hobbs (Strategic Manager)
Safeguarding Trustee Lead (STL): Dave Bailey

Approved by the Board of trustees and signed on their behalf by Chair:

Date: 13th February 2025
Review date: February 2028

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Safeguarding Procedure and additional guidance information

What to do: Responding to disclosures of abuse
It is important that all employees and volunteers are aware of their responsibilities if a child or young person discloses information that indicates that they may be at risk of harm, or where abuse is suspected. For clarity, where this procedure refers to a child, this means any child or young person aged 18 or under.

It is not the responsibility of employees and volunteers to investigate suspected abuse but it is their responsibility to report concerns immediately (i.e. on the same day that they have a concern) to the designated safeguarding person (DSP), or the Safeguarding Trustee Lead (STL) in the absence of the DSP, as soon as possible.

- If you notice any social changes in the behaviour of a child, observe worrying marks or bruises, or hear someone talking about things which give you cause for concern, then your first responsibility is to the child at risk first and foremost. It is not safe to assume that someone else will do something. As a responsible adult, you have a duty to take appropriate action.
- In the event that a disclosure is made by a child, or if something is seen or heard that causes concern for a child, the employee or volunteer must not ask leading questions of the child but should make a note of what they have been told, see or hear, and pass this information on to the person in charge of the child or young person (e.g., the teacher or youth leader) and inform the CCSM and DSP that they have done so, as soon as possible.
- When the young person is a volunteer directly with the charity, the DSP/STL must be informed immediately, or as soon as possible; taking brief notes of actual words used by the young person disclosing information or making a brief note or sketch where necessary to avoid a lack of clarity later.
- The employee or volunteer should share all information with the DSP/STL as soon as practically possible, even when information has been passed on to the person in charge (e.g., the teacher or youth leader).
- It can be stressful and emotional when experiencing a disclosure of harm or abuse of someone else, and so it is important that all information and your feelings are shared openly.
- The DSP (or STL) will have the responsibility for deciding on any actions which need to be taken and will support the employee or volunteer with their own responses and feelings.

- If both the DSP and the STL are unavailable, the employee or volunteer should always contact the local authority safeguarding team for advice by contacting **First Contact on 03000 26 79 79**
- In any situation where someone has been hurt or where there is an immediate risk of harm, or where there is an illegal activity disclosed or seen, the employee or volunteer must always call 999 before taking any other action.

Photography
Written permission from parent/carers should be obtained before taking or using photographs or videos of children or young people participating in activities with the charity. No image of any kind of a child or young person should be used by the charity without this explicit permission being given in writing.

Role of the DSP and STL
Where the child has attended an activity of the charity with their school, choir, club, or other organized group, the DSP (or STL) will liaise closely with the appropriate member(s) of staff or leader of that group and decide together who is the most appropriate person to take any actions required and speak with the parent or carer.

However, the DSP (or STL) should always follow-up if the school or leader of the child's organization agrees to take an action to ensure that this action was taken, and to follow-up with the local authority with their concerns if it wasn't.

When the young person is volunteering directly with the charity, we will always involve and inform parents or carers as soon as possible all and any actions that the DSP (or STL) decide needs to be taken, including seeking advice from, or making a referral to, the local authority.

There could be circumstances when speaking to a parent or carer would put the child at greater risk of harm, or there may be concerns that parents/carers will not respond appropriately or be able to safeguard their child(ren).
In this situation, the DSP (or STL) will not inform the parent but make a call to either the police or safeguarding team via First Contact immediately, or as soon as possible, depending on the circumstances.

The Safeguarding website for children in County Durham is
http://www.durham-scp.org.uk
The DSP (or STL) will be responsible for making a referral on behalf of the charity.

If the initial referral or enquiry is made by telephone, this must be followed up in writing using the correct form within 48 hours. https://www.durham-scp.org.uk/professionals/

If an initial child protection conference is convened for a child, the DSP (or STL) may be asked to submit a report and should use the correct multi-agency template and submit this within the specified timeframe.

As we do not provide direct services for children or young people, it is unlikely that we will be involved at further review or core group meetings, but the charity may be asked to contribute if the young person is volunteering with us. We will always respond appropriately to requests made for information, giving transparent and accurate updates.

Checklist of what to do in the event of a disclosure

1. Explain to the child or young person that if he/she discloses information which leads you to believe they are being abused, you will not be able to keep it confidential.
2. Listen to the child or young person without questioning him/her.
3. Be aware of your own reactions as showing disapproval may stop the child from continuing with their disclosure.
4. Do not try to stop the child or young person from recalling events. Make a note of what is said, in what context, the setting, the timing and which people were present. Do not ask leading questions or prompt for further information.
5. Reassure the child or young person and tell them that they were right to tell you (do not promise to keep it a secret as it is your responsibility to inform others).
6. Accept what you have been told.
7. Reassure the child or young person and stress that they are not to blame.
8. Stay calm – ensure the child or young person is safe and feels safe.
9. Tell the child or young person that you will have to pass the information on.
10. Monitor the child or young person concerned if a disclosure or observation is made during a Day Club session or event; encourage them to continue to take part in the activities and make your own arrangements to take appropriate action as soon as possible.
11. Do not make promises you cannot keep.
12. Do not approach or contact the alleged abuser(s). This is not our role.

Reporting Procedures checklist

1. Record the concern, incident or disclosure, including the date and time of what has occurred, been observed/heard or the time the disclosure was made.
2. Record the names of the people involved and what was said and done by whom and any action they have taken.
3. Inform the DSP or STL immediately, or as soon as possible, and pass on all information you have noted.
4. Remember that confidentiality is of the utmost importance.
5. If the matter is urgent and none of the above can be contacted, then always contact **First Contact 03000 26 7979**

Categories and signs of abuse

Abuse is generally divided into four categories for children:

Physical Abuse

E.g., assault, hitting, slapping with an object, pushing, pinching, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

Emotional abuse

E.g., threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, unequal treatment between siblings, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal or withholding of affection, services or supportive family or friendship relationships

Sexual abuse

E.g., rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts.

Neglect

E.g., ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs; failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or education; failure to provide the necessities of life such as food, medication, adequate nutrition and heating. Neglect also includes a failure to intervene in situations that are dangerous to the person concerned or to others, particularly when a child is unable to assess risk for themselves.

Signs of abuse

The signs summarised below do not necessarily mean that a child is being abused. Similarly, there may not be any signs; you may just feel something is wrong. If you are worried at all about anything you should report it to the DSP. It is not your responsibility to decide if it is abuse but it is your responsibility to act on your concerns and do something about it by speaking up.

Signs of physical abuse

- Unexplained injuries, burns, bald patches in hair
- Improbable excuses given to explain injuries
- Refusal to discuss injuries or untreated injuries
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Withdrawal from physical contact
- Arms and legs covered in hot weather
- Fear of returning home
- Fear of medical help
- Self-destructive tendencies
- Aggression towards others or running away

Signs of emotional abuse

- Physical, mental and/or emotional development slows down
- Admission of punishment which appears excessive
- Over-reaction to mistakes or continual self-deprecation
- Sudden speech disorders
- Fear of new situations
- Inappropriate emotional responses to painful situations
- Neurotic behaviour e.g. thumb sucking, hair twisting, etc.
- Self-harm
- Fear of parents or carers being contacted
- Extremes of passivity or aggression
- Substance misuse
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing, scavenging

Signs of sexual abuse

- Lack of trust in adults and/or fear of a particular individual[s]
- Over familiarity with adults or provocative behaviour Displaying sexual knowledge beyond age group
- Withdrawal and introversion/problems with peer relationships
- Running away from home/sudden behaviour changes
- Low self esteem
- Substance misuse
- Involvement in prostitution

Signs of neglect

- Constant hunger
- Poor personal hygiene or poor state of clothing
- Constant tiredness or frequent lateness or non-attendance
- Untreated medical problems
- Destructive tendencies and low self esteem
- Neurotic behaviour
- No social relationships
- Running away
- Compulsive stealing or scavenging

Allegations against staff

Allegations against any staff or volunteers of the charity who have been involved in activities with children or young people participating in Day Club activities, must be referred to the local authority following consultation with the DSP or SLT.

County Durham has a designated officer within the safeguarding board who offers support and advice in relation to allegations and monitors how they are dealt with. This person can be consulted to decide if a concern warrants a referral or not.
When a referral is made, the local authority will hold a strategy discussion to decide how to act and coordinate the response of the different agencies.

The local authority is responsible for the welfare of the child concerned, the police for any criminal investigation and the employer/agency for the disciplinary process.

There may have been an initial telephone strategy discussion to agree immediate action, but this should be followed by a face-to-face meeting involving all agencies to coordinate the 3 processes. The DSP or direct line manager of the employee, or the CCSM or DSP in the case of a volunteer, (or the SLT if a manager of not available), should attend.
If the allegation concerns a member of staff, the charity's board of trustees should be consulted about the implementation of the disciplinary process, taking advice as appropriate from the local authority.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 and the Care Act 2014 clarifies when this procedure should be used, namely, when a person has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed a child
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with children

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015, Handling Allegations of Abuse made against Adults who Work with Children and Young People (DCSF May 2009) the Care Act 2014 and the local authority safeguarding procedures must be consulted when dealing with allegations against staff or volunteers.
If a member of staff or a volunteer is subject to this process, there has to be a written record of the outcome. If the local authority and the police take no further action, it is essential that the charity obtains their view in writing as to what action, if any, the charity should take.

Local authorities and the police cannot direct a charity to reach a particular disciplinary judgment, but they can advise that a charity implements disciplinary procedures.

Whilst the focus of this policy is safeguarding children and young people, it is equally important to ensure that any employee or volunteer subject to this process are treated honestly and fairly and receive appropriate support.

However, when an allegation is being investigated by the Police, it is essential for agreement between the Police, local authority designated officer and the DSP and/or manager responsible for the line management or supervision of the person accused, what information can be shared with the accused member of staff or volunteer.

Referrals to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)
If the charity dismisses a member of staff or volunteer in relation to an allegation, or a member of staff or volunteer resigns but would have been dismissed, the charity has a statutory duty to refer the person to the DBS.
The DBS will consider whether to bar the person from working with children and vulnerable adults.
Referrals to the DBS must state the grounds for the referral and the evidence that demonstrates the referral criteria are met.

If a local authority recommends referring either a member of staff or a volunteer to the DBS, e.g., following a strategy discussion, it is essential that the request is received in writing from the local authority, with the written agreement of the local authority designated officer stating the evidence that supports the local authority's request.

The charity would normally only refer staff or volunteers to the DBS once any disciplinary process is complete and referrals must be made in line with the DBS guidance demonstrating how the individual has:

- engaged in relevant conduct,
- satisfied the Harm Test, or
- received a caution or conviction for a relevant offence.

Safer Recruitment
All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure unsuitable individuals are prevented from having any involvement with the charity.

- Staff and volunteer recruitment procedures will include a DBS check at the appropriate level when the role involves regulated activity, or where the person has any management or supervisory

responsibility for anyone else managing/supervising a young person (or adult at risk).

- All staff and all volunteers regardless of their role will be asked to provide at least two references from independent people (e.g., not family members) prior to starting in their role.
- Employees will be asked to provide photo ID at interview and NI records should be checked to ascertain a person's right to work where this is not clear.
- New members of staff and volunteers will have a designated person who will ensure that an appropriate level of induction for their role takes place.
- All new staff and volunteers will be asked to read and understand our safeguarding policies and agree to behave according to the principles of our code of conduct.

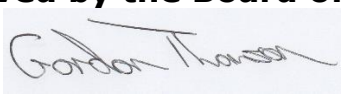
DBS checks and assessing them

Any DBS check that reveals a disclosure that causes concern will be assessed to establish the level of risk the subject poses to children, young people, members, volunteers, the general public and the charity. A number of questions will be asked:

- Does the offence relate directly to work with children or adults at risk?
- What is the seriousness of the offence/s and the circumstances surrounding it?
- How long is it since the offence was committed?
- Does the subject have a pattern of offending?
- Has the subject's situation changed since the offence occurred?
- What is the subject's explanation of the offence?
- Did the subject declare the offence prior to the Disclosure?

If any of these questions are not answered satisfactorily, then the prospective employee or volunteer will go through a probation and induction process, including relevant training. Ongoing training and supervision will ensure all staff and volunteers are adequately supported.

Approved by the Board of trustees and signed on their behalf by

Chair: 

Date: 12th May 2022

Reviewed with policy every 3 years