

York Down Syndrome Support Group

Safeguarding Policy (Successor to Child Protection Policy)

About our group and this policy

York Down Syndrome Support Group (YDSSG) is a parent led support group for families enlivened by a member with Down Syndrome. The group is entirely led and supported by parents and families of the group. Currently the group do not undertake any activity in which children or vulnerable adults are supervised without the oversight of their parent, a close family member or a school appointed member of staff. This policy reflects that position and will be reviewed and revised as is required to take account of the development of the group.

We are grateful to, and acknowledge the support of, Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd to us whilst drafting of our policy.

The term “workers” in this document refers to YDSSG committee members and (if they become employed) any external volunteer workers or paid staff.

Policy Statement

York Down Syndrome Support Group is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all people that we support. It recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect people from harm, abuse and exploitation. York Down Syndrome Parents’ Group acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse.

All the group’s workers will endeavour to work together to encourage the development of an ethos which embraces difference and diversity and respects the rights of children, young people and adults.

York Down Syndrome Support Group will:

- Ensure that all workers understand their legal and moral responsibility to protect children and vulnerable people from harm, abuse and exploitation;
- Ensure that all workers understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a child or vulnerable person, or a worker’s conduct towards a person, to the organisation’s named person for safeguarding;
- Ensure that the named person understands his/her responsibility to refer any concerns to the statutory agencies (i.e. Police and/or Social Work);
- Provide opportunities for all workers to develop their skills and knowledge particularly in relation to the welfare and protection of children and vulnerable people;
- Ensure that children and vulnerable people are enabled to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues
- Ensure that parents/carers are encouraged to be involved in the work of the organisation and, when requested, have access to all guidelines and procedures;

- Endeavour to keep up-to-date with national developments relating to the welfare and protection of children and vulnerable people.

Safeguarding Procedures

Section 1 – Introduction

York Down Syndrome Support Group (YDSSG) aims to provide support, information, activities and training for families caring for children with Down syndrome and also the professionals who work with them. Currently at the events arranged to meet this provision children and persons who have down syndrome are always accompanied by their parents and/or family members, or by a designated carer.

These procedures aim to ensure the welfare and protection of any child and/or vulnerable person who attends any activity hosted by York Down Syndrome Support Group. Protecting children and vulnerable people is everybody's responsibility and therefore the aim here is to provide guidelines that will enable all workers to act appropriately to any concerns that arise in respect of a vulnerable person.

- **Section 2 – General procedures**

- ***Parental/Carer responsibility***

YDSSG will make clear to its members that parents or designated carers are responsible for the care of their family members at group events unless specified otherwise.

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- ***External Visitors***

External visitors to the group are not to be left alone with unaccompanied children or vulnerable adults.

- ***Contracting third parties for the supply of services***

If YDSSG contract a third-party organisation to provide a service to its members, the YDSSG will ensure that the said organisation has appropriate safeguarding procedures and policies in place.

- ***Recruitment and Selection of Staff***

If YDSSG employ a member of staff or an external volunteer who is likely to be in contact with children or vulnerable person without the oversight of a parent or designated carer, the individual must agree to a DBS check being obtained prior to their recruitment. This will be made clear on any application form for employment. It will also be stated as part of any interview process and will be a condition before any offer of employment or volunteering can be confirmed.

The YDSSG will seek references for such staff and will not allow a member of staff to start working with children or young people until it has received assurance that the staff member is suitable to do so.

The YDSSG will ensure that all staff are properly trained in issues around Safeguarding.

If the YDSSG dismiss a worker because of misconduct with children or a vulnerable person, they will refer the person for inclusion on DBS Barred persons list.

Code of Conduct

The YDSSG will ensure that the following code of conduct for workers with vulnerable people is followed at all times.

The code is designed to minimise situations where abuse may occur by stipulating that:

- workers avoid situations where they are alone and unobserved with individual vulnerable people;
- all activity, as far as possible, is publicly observed or conducted in a group setting;
- inappropriate touching of any form is never permitted;
- the use of inappropriate language never goes unchallenged;
- appropriate action will be taken in all cases and instances of child or vulnerable person concerns
- Workers who “whistle blow” making bona fide complaints about colleagues’ behaviour will not be punished, even if the concerns prove unfounded

DBS checks

DBS checks will take place at the start of a member of staff’s employment, paid or voluntary, and prior to any unsupervised contact with vulnerable people.

DBS checks will be renewed every three years for voluntary staff and every six years for paid members of staff.

If any issues or queries are raised YDSSG have the right to request a new DBS check at any time on any member of staff.

Risk assessments

Prior to undertaking a group led or hosted activity, the worker leading the activity will undertake (or ensure that) a risk assessment is in place and has been appropriately disseminated.

Photography/Video or audio recordings

As a group, YDSSG will not publicise to those outside the group, a photograph or recording of group members unless they have obtained parental assent or member consent.

Section 3 - Recognising the Signs and Symptoms of Abuse

• Different types of Abuse

YDSSG recognises that it has a duty to act on reports or suspicions of abuse. It also acknowledges that taking action in cases of abuse is never easy. However we believe that the safety of the person should override any doubts or hesitations.

As defined by the Care act abuse refers to Ten different types of abuse: [Physical abuse](#), [Domestic violence or abuse](#), [Sexual abuse](#), [Psychological or emotional abuse](#), [Financial or material abuse](#), [Modern slavery](#), [Discriminatory abuse](#), [Organisational or institutional abuse](#), [Neglect or acts of omission](#) and [Self-neglect](#). Appendix 1 Lists these definitions in more detail. All staff need to familiarise themselves with these definitions.

YDSSG will establish an **Incident log** where the safeguarding officer will record any reported incidents or breach of Safeguarding policies and procedures. This will be kept in a secure place and its contents will be confidential to the Safeguarding officer and the Chair of YDSSG.

YDSSG will require that all workers and staff members whether paid or unpaid, have undertaken training (such as “Safeguarding Matters” e learning provided Disability Matters <https://www.disabilitymatters.org.uk/> or that provided by City of York Council on their MyLO learning site <https://york.learningpool.com/login/index.php>) to gain a basic awareness and understanding of safeguarding.

A child or vulnerable person’s safety can come to light by, for example:

- a person alleges that abuse has taken place or that they feel unsafe;
- a third party or anonymous allegation is received;
- a person’s appearance, behaviour, play, drawing or statements cause suspicion of abuse and/or neglect;
- a person reports an incident(s) of alleged abuse which occurred some time ago;
- a report is made regarding the serious misconduct of a worker towards a child or vulnerable person.

Section 4 - A Named Person(s) for Safeguarding

YDSSG has an appointed an individual who is responsible for dealing with any safeguarding concerns. In their absence, a deputy will always be available for workers to consult with. The named persons for Safeguarding within the York Down Syndrome Support Group:

Named Person for Child Protection:	Laura Swales
Mobile number:	07739845612
Home contact no:	01904 768560

Deputy

Name of contact person:	Liz Allen
Mobile number:	07748645804
Home contact no:	01904 658255

The role and responsibilities of the named person(s) are:

- To ensure that all workers are aware of what they should do and who they should go to if they are concerned that a person maybe subject to abuse or neglect.
- Ensure that any concerns about a person are acted on, clearly recorded, referred on where necessary and, followed up to ensure the issues are addressed.
- The Named Person(s) will record any reported incidents in relation to a person or breach of safeguarding policies and procedures. This will be kept in a secure place and its contents will be confidential.

Section 5 - Stages to Follow if you are Worried about a vulnerable person

YDSSG recognises that it has a duty to act on reports or suspicions of abuse. It also acknowledges that taking action in cases of abuse is never easy. However the YDSSG believes that the safety of the person should override any doubts or hesitations. When worrying changes are observed in a person’s behaviour, physical condition or appearance workers will:

Stage 1

- > Initially talk to the person about what you are observing. It is okay to ask questions, for example: "I've noticed that you don't appear yourself today, is everything okay? But never use leading questions
- > Listen carefully to what the person has to say and take it seriously;
- > Never investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where a person makes a disclosure;
- > Always explain to the person that any information they have given will have to be shared with others;
- > Notify the organisation's Named Person for Safeguarding.
- > Record what was said as soon as possible after any disclosure; The person who receives the allegation or has the concern should complete the pro-forma and ensure it is signed and dated.
- > Respect confidentiality and file documents securely;

Stage 2

- The Named person(s) will take immediate action if there is a suspicion that a child or vulnerable adult has been abused or likely to be abused. In this situation the Named Person will contact the police and/or Social Care. If a referral is made direct to Children's or Adult Social Care this must be followed up in writing within 24 hours.
- The named person can also seek advice and clarity about a situation that is beginning to raise concern through the NSPCC National Child Protection Helpline on 0800 8800 5000

A flowchart outlining these stages is included, see appendix 2

If you have reason to believe that a child or vulnerable person is at immediate risk of harm, contact the police on 999

The NSPCC Child Protection Helpline is a free 24-hour service that provides counselling, information and advice to anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse. Telephone: 080 8800 5000 - Email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Local Authority Contacts

City of York

Adults: Contact **adult** social care 01904 555111 (office hours) or fax 01904 554055. Hearing impaired customers can use the text facility 07534 437804. Out of hours, 01609 780780. Online links and form to report concerns are available at: <https://www.safeguardingadultsyork.org.uk/what-is-safeguarding/how-to-raise-a-safeguarding-concern/>

Children: Contact the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in York on **01904 551900** and select option 3 or email **MASH@york.gov.uk**. Outside office hours, at weekends and on public holidays contact the emergency duty team on **01609 780780**.

If you would like to make an early help referral or access advice for a family, you can contact the MASH Early Help Team on **01904 551900** and select option 2 or email them at earlyhelp@york.gov.uk

North Yorkshire

Adults: If you or the person you are concerned about is not in immediate danger, you should ring our customer services centre on 01609 780780. This includes outside of office hours. The Minicom number is **01609 779838**.

All staff and professionals working with adults should use the Raising a Safeguarding Concern Form which is available from: <https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/safeguarding-vulnerable-adults>

Children: If you believe the situation is urgent but does not require the police, please call 01609 780780 to make a telephone contact.

Should your call be outside of business hours (Monday – Friday / 9am-5pm) please still call 01609 780780 to speak to the Emergency Duty Team.

A written referral using the universal referral form must be completed and submitted within 24 hours of your telephone call. You do not need to make a telephone contact prior to submitting a written referral should the situation not be urgent. To make a written referral, a universal referral form must be completed. This can be downloaded from <https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/about-us/worried-about-a-child/> You must ensure that all relevant information, including parental consent or clear reasons why this has not been obtained, is provided to ensure that the referral can be progressed as effectively as possible. You will receive acknowledgement of your contact being received. Should you not receive this please follow up to ensure your information has been received.

East Riding of Yorkshire:

Adults: Please call [01482 396940](tel:01482396940) to make a phone report and see <http://www.ersab.org.uk/#report> for links to make an online or paper based report.

Children: See <http://www.erscb.org.uk/how-to-report-concerns/>

Office hours: 01482 395500

Out of Hours Contact Number -Emergency Duty Team 01482 393939

Leeds

Adults: Social Care: 0113 222 4401 Out of hours: 0113 378 0644

Children: Contact form available at <https://www.leedsscp.org.uk/Concerned-about-a-child>. During office hours (9.00am – 5.00pm) call the Duty & Advice Team on 0113 376 0336 (option 2). Out of office hours (evenings, weekends and bank holidays) call the Children's Emergency Duty Team (EDT) on 0113 5350600

Section 5 – Managing Allegations made against a worker

YDSSG will ensure that any allegations made against a group member or worker will be dealt with swiftly and in accordance with these procedures:

- The individual must ensure that that the child or vulnerable person is safe and away from the person whom the allegation is made.
- The named person for safeguarding should be informed immediately. In the case of an allegation involving the named person, alternative arrangements should be sought to ensure that the matter is dealt with by an independent person. (Note: this could be a committee member, director or anyone within the organisation that is in a senior position within the organisation and believed to be independent of the allegations being made).
- The named person should contact the local area children's or adult social care department for advice on how to proceed with the immediate situation. Outside of

working hours the Emergency Duty Team can give advice and/or in the event of an emergency situation arising, the police.

- The individual who first received/witnessed the concern should make a full written record of what was seen, heard and/or told as soon as possible after observing the incident/receiving the report. It is important that the report is an accurate description. The named person (if appropriate) can support the individual during this process but must not complete the report for the individual. This report must be made available on request from either the police and/or social services.
- Regardless of whether a police and/or social services investigation follows, YDSSG will ensure that an internal investigation takes place and consideration is given to the operation of disciplinary procedures. This may involve an immediate suspension and/or ultimate dismissal, or exclusion from the group dependent on the nature of the incident.
- Depending on the nature of the incident, if appropriate the named person will make a report to the Charity Commission.

Section 6 - Recording and managing confidential information

A form for recording concerns/allegations of abuse, harm and neglect is attached. The person who receives the allegation or has the concern should complete this form. See appendix 3.

York Down Syndrome Support Group is committed to managing such confidential information safely. It will be stored in a secure file and will only be shared should YDSSG consider the person to be at risk of harm or abuse

Section 7 – Disseminating/Reviewing Policies and Procedures

This policy will be made available to members via our website.

The policy is to be reviewed bi-annually in January of every other year by the named person or the deputy named person, or sooner should the group require it.

Any changes/amendments will be clarified and shared with workers and where significant changes they will be relayed to parents/carers via the newsletter or email.

Dated 24/01/21.....Signed.....



Position in YDSSG Committee member – Health Lead

Name Liz Allen

Version/amendment log:

Version	Date	Brief details of amendment
2	11.05.18	Updated name of group. Redrafted reference and DBS check requirements for volunteers who do not have responsibilities for care of children.
3	23.01.21	Policy re- titled and scope broadened to include vulnerable people of all ages and to become a Safeguarding Policy. Inclusion of DBS barred persons list referral in the case of misconduct dismissal. Abuse definitions updated. Local authority contact information updated Charity Commission incident referral included

Appendix 1

The Care act paragraph 14.17 lists different types of abuse as follows:

Physical abuse including:

- assault
- hitting
- slapping
- pushing
- misuse of medication
- restraint
- inappropriate physical sanctions

Domestic violence including:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional abuse
- so called 'honour' based violence

Sexual abuse including:

- rape
- indecent exposure
- sexual harassment
- inappropriate looking or touching
- sexual teasing or innuendo
- sexual photography
- subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts
- indecent exposure
- sexual assault
- sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting

Psychological abuse including:

- emotional abuse
- threats of harm or abandonment
- deprivation of contact
- humiliation
- blaming

- controlling
- intimidation
- coercion
- harassment
- verbal abuse
- cyber bullying
- isolation
- unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks

Financial or material abuse including:

- theft
- fraud
- internet scamming
- coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions
- the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits

Modern slavery encompasses:

- slavery
- human trafficking
- forced labour and domestic servitude.
- traffickers and slave masters using whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment

Discriminatory abuse including forms of:

- harassment
- slurs or similar treatment:
 - because of race
 - gender and gender identity
 - age
 - disability
 - sexual orientation
 - religion

Organisational abuse

Including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Neglect and acts of omission including:

- ignoring medical
- emotional or physical care needs
- failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services
- the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating

Self-neglect

This covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding. It should be noted that self-neglect may not prompt a section 42 enquiry. An assessment should be made on a case by case basis. A decision on whether a response is required under safeguarding will depend on the adult's ability to protect themselves by controlling their own behaviour. There may come a point when they are no longer able to do this, without external support.

Appendix 3

• Pro forma for recording child protection concerns

Recording is a valuable tool in child protection; any concerns for the welfare of a child or young person should be recorded on the recording pro-forma.

The purpose for these recordings are to accurately register and pass on information to other professionals in order that informed decisions can be made and that should patterns emerge they do not go unnoticed. Every worker who has cause for concern / suspicion of harm or who directly takes a disclosure must make a recording. Recordings will also be made by the manager of any action taken.

CONFIDENTIAL

This pro-forma must be completed by any worker who receives an allegation/disclosure of abuse from a child/young person or who has concerns about a child/young person. Fill in the information given to you or write down your concerns. Do not try to ascertain further details, or ask investigating questions. If you do not know then leave the section blank.

Details of the person:

Name..... Date of Birth.....

Address.....

If Child, who has parental responsibility?.....

Address.....

Name & address of other significant adults:

Name	Relationship	Address	Date of Birth

If child details of siblings:

Name	Address	Date of Birth/or age

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What professionals are you aware of that are currently in contact with the child/young person e.g. teacher, youth worker, social worker, health visitor, doctor etc?

Name	Agency	Address	Contact Number

Please record the details of what information was given/shared with you by the child/young person, you must use their words. Alternatively please record in detail your concerns about the child/young person

Please read the above and ensure that it contains fact and not workers opinion.

State date & time of the above.

Date...../...../..... Time.....

Venue.....