



**ADCH**  
Association of Dogs and Cats Homes

*together for  
dogs + cats*

# SAFEGUARDING POLICY

(incl Children and Vulnerable Adults)

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# SAFEGUARDING POLICY

## Introduction

Safeguarding is about protecting people from harm and dealing effectively with any issues if they arise. ADCH is committed to safeguarding the well-being of all those it comes into contact with through its work, particularly children and vulnerable adults who by definition are at increased risk of potential harm and may not be able to protect themselves.

Safeguarding is also about protecting all Parties that make up ADCH and all those that ADCH comes into contact with. All Parties should be able to work in an environment where they are treated with respect and are not subjected to inappropriate behaviour. Where any such harm is suspected of occurring to or being caused by any Party in the course of their work, the procedures set out in this Policy, Bullying & Harassment Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Grievance Resolution Policy and other relevant policies should be followed, as appropriate.

This document provides the procedure and detail regarding Safeguarding. It is the responsibility of all Parties to be cognisant of the importance of safeguarding in the way they work and the way those around them work. Whilst not an exhaustive list, the term 'Party' and/or 'all Parties' relates to and includes Trustees, Staff, volunteers, temporary agency worker, consultant, contacts, customer supporters, high-profile friends, corporate partners and anybody else who works for or is engaged by ADCH, either in a paid or unpaid capacity.

ADCH has a Framework for Raising Complaints & Concerns. Please refer to this Framework to help you determine if this or another Policy is the most appropriate one to raise your complaint or concern under.

Any and all Parties who work for, on behalf of, or is engaged by ADCH, either in a paid or unpaid capacity (who are, for the purposes of this policy, referred to 'Party' or 'Parties') must work in accordance with this Policy and report any safeguarding concerns to the Designated Officer ([secretary@adch.org.uk](mailto:secretary@adch.org.uk)), or if they do not feel comfortable to do so or are unsure, to their Primary point of Contact.

## Purpose

The purpose of the policy is:

- To ensure that ADCH's activities take place in a safe and protective environment where harm is prevented as far as reasonably possible and issues are responded to effectively.
- To ensure that all Parties are aware of what safeguarding means and the standards of behaviour expected of them in relation to their interactions with children, vulnerable adults, and other people they come into contact with during their work with ADCH.
- To safeguard the reputation of ADCH and public trust and confidence in it.

## Definitions

For the purposes of safeguarding at ADCH, the following definitions are referred to in this policy:

- **‘Children’** means any young person under the age of 18 years. In the context of this policy, it relates to anyone working with or coming into contact with a young person under the age of 18 in the course of their involvement with ADCH.
- **‘Safeguarding Children’** means to protect children from harm.
- **‘Vulnerable Adults’** means people who are 18 or over who are at risk of harm because of their needs for care and/or support. In the context of this policy, it relates to anyone working with or coming into contact with a vulnerable adult in the course of their involvement with ADCH.

A vulnerable adult may:

- have an illness affecting their mental or physical health
  - have a physical disability
  - have a learning disability
  - have a mental health condition
  - have drug or alcohol misuse problems
  - be an older person who is physically or mentally frail
  - be homeless, living in a sheltered or residential care home
  - lack the capacity to understand what is happening, the consequences of actions and therefore the capacity to make decisions
  - be unable, for any other reason, to protect themselves from harm
- **‘Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults’** means to protect vulnerable adults from harm.
  - **‘Harm’** means abuse and neglect. Abuse includes physical, emotional, sexual, financial, discriminatory, and domestic abuse.
  - **‘Abuse’** (misuse of power and control that one person has over another, abuse also includes failing to act, and can take place anywhere)
  - **‘Party/All Parties’** (while not an exhaustive list) relates to and includes Trustees, Staff, volunteers, temporary agency worker, consultant, contacts, customer supporters, high-profile friends and corporate partners and anybody else who works for or is engaged by ADCH, either in a paid or unpaid capacity.
  - **‘Primary point of Contact’** – this is the party that any stakeholder would generally go to in the first instance for a normal enquiry. For staff members, this would be their Line Manager.
  - **‘Working’** means paid and unpaid work by any and all Parties for, on behalf of or engaged by ADCH.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES**

All Parties are responsible for:

- Reading, understanding and complying with this Policy
- Holding one another to account in their behaviours
- Report any Safeguarding concerns.

**All Parties and stakeholders** are responsible for:

- Familiarising themselves with the Policy and ensuring they conduct themselves in a manner consistent with its requirements.

### **Designated Safeguarding Officer**

The Designated Safeguarding Officer is the ADCH Secretary ([secretary@adch.org.uk](mailto:secretary@adch.org.uk)) and is responsible for:

- Providing advice to the organisation about safeguarding
- Ensuring appropriate training is provided to all relevant Parties
- Ensuring safeguarding risks and controls are appropriately included in the organisational Risk Register
- Receiving and reviewing reports of safeguarding concerns
- Managing the referral process to the DBS and Charity Commission and liaising with statutory and regulatory services as required
- Overseeing investigations into safeguarding concerns raised against any ADCH Party/Parties
- Reporting safeguarding incidents to the ADCH Chair and to the Finance, Governance & Risk Committee.

### **Trustees**

Trustees are responsible for ensuring an appropriate culture, working practices, policies and procedures are in place to protect anyone that comes into contact with ADCH from harm.

Trustees are expected to comply with this policy in their work with ADCH.

Trustees are expected to review safeguarding concerns brought to their attention to ensure effective organisational oversight of the safeguarding culture of ADCH.

The Chair and Finance, Governance & Risk Committee will have oversight of Safeguarding at ADCH and will receive regular reports of any significant safeguarding incidents from the Designated Safeguarding Officer. They will report any key concerns to Trustees via a regular update at Board Meetings and ensure that appropriate reporting to relevant authorities, including Serious Incident Reporting to the Charity Commission, is taking place as necessary.

# PROCEDURE

## Recognising Safeguarding Risks in Carrying Out Our work

### CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS

Children and vulnerable adults can be harmed, or put at risk of harm, by individuals or organisations and, by definition, may not be able to protect themselves.

Harm, or risk of harm, may result from unintentional acts or deliberate actions. Unintentional acts may arise due to a lack of understanding, 'due diligence', inadequate care and supervision, or lack of compliance with policies, procedures and guidance. Deliberate actions may be taken by people with intent to harm children or vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding risks to be aware of include neglect, physical, emotional, sexual, financial, discriminatory, and domestic abuse.

Whilst safeguarding indicators or warning signs of potential harm being caused to children or vulnerable adults can be extremely varied, these examples may help to aid understanding:

- Persistent requests being made to a known or perceived vulnerable adult;
- Inappropriate physical contact with a child or vulnerable adult at an ADCH event;
- Parties trying to find opportunities to be left on their own with a child or vulnerable adult in the course of their work;
- Parties making private contact (in person, by phone, personal email or other forms of electronic media) with a child or vulnerable adult;
- Any Party noticing evidence of harm to a vulnerable person during the course of their work.

**It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of safeguarding scenarios or indicators of harm, so all Parties are strongly encouraged to use their judgement in determining when to report a safeguarding concern they have identified.** If you feel concerned or have a concern raised with you, please refer to **Annexes A ('Do's and Don't's when Dealing with a Safeguarding Concern')**.

ADCH undertakes safe recruitment practices including obtaining references and obtaining Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks as relevant for any Party working on their behalf with children or vulnerable adults.

When undertaking community, fundraising or other activities where children or vulnerable adults may be present, risk assessments must be undertaken and it may be necessary to put additional appropriate measures in place.

When interacting with children or vulnerable adults during work, judgement must be used to assess whether they have the mental capacity to make the decisions they are involved with and to commit to any associated costs. If any Party has a concern about this, they should identify whether the child or vulnerable adult has someone who can support them at that time or delay the outcome of the interaction until they do.

## ALL PARTIES

Whilst safeguarding indicators or warning signs of potential harm being caused can be extremely varied, these examples may help to aid understanding:

- Unwanted personal attention (eg physical contact, or suggestive/intimate comments) being given by one Party to another in the course of their work, in a work setting or at an ADCH event such as a work party, Open Meeting, Conference etc;
- A manager or more senior member of staff engaging in email correspondence of an intimate or sexual nature with a more junior member of staff or volunteer during working time and/or using their work email;
- A manager or more senior member of staff making unwanted private contact (in person, in writing, by phone, personal email or other forms of electronic media) with a more junior member of staff or volunteer;
- A junior member of staff receiving unwanted personal attention from a potential or existing charity partner, supporter or other;
- A member of staff being put under inappropriate pressure from a sponsor, potential sponsor, charity partner or supporter or any other Party to attempt to influence ADCH's policies or strategy;
- A Trustee/manager or more senior member of staff behaving inappropriately with a more junior member of staff or volunteer indicating that this will enable them to have preferential treatment (eg in a recruitment process or in a performance review);
- Parties entering into a relationship with one another which might cause a conflict of interest and not declaring this;
- Any Party pursuing or entering into a romantic relationship with a vulnerable adult volunteer;
- Parties engaging in games or other behaviour which involve unwanted or inappropriate physical contact or place someone at risk of harming themselves or others.

**It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of safeguarding scenarios or indicators of harm, so staff and volunteers are strongly encouraged to use their judgement in determining when to report a safeguarding concern they have identified.**

There may be times where one or more Parties experience inappropriate behaviour initiated by people who they come into contact with through their work, which may include children or vulnerable adults. We expect ADCH Parties to take immediate action to remove themselves from any such situations and to alert the person accompanying the child or vulnerable adult.

Where a safeguarding concern is suspected of occurring to or relating to our staff or volunteers in the course of their work, the procedures set out in our Framework.

## Good Practice Guidance

Good practice reduces the risk of harm. The following guidelines are intended to be a common-sense approach that reduce opportunities for harm, particularly to children and vulnerable adults, staff and volunteers. They also help to protect Parties from any false safeguarding allegation during their work with and for ADCH. *Not following this guidance and the Safeguarding Policy may result in disciplinary action.*

### **Whilst working with and for ADCH you should:**

- Treat all children, vulnerable adults, and all other Parties with respect, and respect their right to personal privacy;
- Work in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy;
- If safe and appropriate to do so at the time, challenge unacceptable behaviour relating to the safeguarding of children or vulnerable adult or other Parties that you witness in the course of your work with and for ADCH, and report any suspicions of harm to them to the Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible;
- Challenge any unacceptable behaviour towards yourself, or to or from other Parties relating to safeguarding concerns and report it to the Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

### **Whilst working with and for ADCH you should not:**

- Plan to/be alone with a child or vulnerable adult customer or supporter unless in exceptional circumstances;
- Meet with an unaccompanied child or vulnerable adult customer or supporter privately outside of ADCH organised activities;
- Have unaccompanied children or vulnerable adult customers or supporters with you in your home (for example when rehoming an animal directly from your home) or any other private place;
- Restrain a child or vulnerable adult customer or supporter unless the restraint is to prevent physical injury of them or others;
- Have inappropriate physical contact with or from a child or vulnerable adult customer or supporter;
- Do things of a personal nature for a child or vulnerable adult customer or supporter (eg assist with toileting);
- Make private contact with a child or vulnerable adult customer or supporter by phone, in writing, by personal email or other forms of electronic media;
- Pursue or enter into a romantic relationship with a vulnerable adult volunteer, customer or supporter;
- Have or share sexual material relating to children, vulnerable adults or animals at any time;
- Show or share sexually explicit material with children, vulnerable adults or other Parties at any time using a personal or ADCH phone, email or any other forms of electronic media;
- Take photographs, videos or other images of a child or vulnerable adult without the consent of their parent, guardian or carer who should be present
- Give a child or vulnerable adult a personal gift of any kind unless it forms part of a formal public, awards ceremony presented during the course of ADCH's work;
- Make persistent requests for donations, support or information from vulnerable adults;

- Make private contact (in person, by phone, in writing, personal email or other forms of electronic media) with any Party which is unwanted;
- Give unwanted personal attention (eg physical contact, suggestive/intimate verbal comments or emails) to any Party in the course of your work or in a work setting such as a work party;
- Engage in games with any Party which involves unwanted or inappropriate physical contact or place someone at risk of harming themselves or others;
- Have inappropriate physical contact with a colleague in the course of your work;
- Enter into a relationship with a Trustee or colleague which might cause a conflict of interest and not declaring it;
- Ignore allegations, sexually suggestive comments, or inappropriate behaviour made towards any Party in the course of your work.

It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of safeguarding scenarios or indicators of harm, so Trustees, staff and volunteers are strongly encouraged to use their judgement in their interactions with others, and in determining when to report a safeguarding concern they have identified.

### **ADCH Safeguarding Commitments**

ADCH takes all reasonable measures to ensure people coming into contact with the charity through our work are protected, as far as possible, from harm. We do this through:

- Treating any disclosure of a previous criminal conviction fairly and making a decision on whether to appoint to a role based on an assessment of risk;
- Requesting two written references and checking qualifications where relevant as part of our recruitment process;
- Ensuring all Parties understand and are aware of risks relating to safeguarding which are appropriate to the role they are undertaking and are clear about the process to follow;
- Ensuring that safeguarding risks are assessed, putting appropriate measures in place to minimise any identified risks, and ensuring safeguarding risks and controls are appropriately included in the organisational Risk Register;
- Following the [Fundraising Regulator](#) and Institute of [Fundraising](#) guidance to ensure the protection of vulnerable donors when fundraising;
- Having a Designated Safeguarding Officer ([secretary@adch.org.uk](mailto:secretary@adch.org.uk)) who has organisational responsibility for monitoring safeguarding issues, receiving and reviewing reports of safeguarding concerns, and overseeing investigations into allegations of abuse made against ADCH Parties;
- Ensuring that concerns of safeguarding harm raised by or on behalf of children or vulnerable adults who come into contact with ADCH through our work are investigated in accordance with our relevant policies;
- Ensuring that concerns of harm which affect ADCH Parties as a result of their work with us are investigated in accordance with our relevant policies;

- Reporting safeguarding concerns or incidents to external authorities, statutory services and regulators, as appropriate. Any concerns in relation to data protection will not act as a barrier to reporting, although they will be carefully considered to ensure that the disclosure is made within the legal framework for so doing and appropriate legal advice will be sought on a case-by-case basis where this is necessary;
- Taking appropriate and proportionate action dependent upon the Parties involved if this Safeguarding Policy is not complied with.

### **Reporting and Responding to Concerns Regarding Children or Vulnerable Adults**

Report all concerns or suspicions of possible or actual harm to children or vulnerable adults who come into contact with ADCH, or safeguarding concerns related to any other ADCH Parties as to the Designated Safeguarding Officer as soon as possible.

If you feel concerned about a child or vulnerable adult, please do the following:

- Refer to **Annex A (Do's and Don't's)** to help make sure you take the right steps;
- Complete **Annex B (Safeguarding Concern Form)** giving the fullest details possible;
- Send the form to the Designated Safeguarding Officer, and follow up to make sure they have received it;
- As appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Officer will report safeguarding concerns or incidents to external authorities, statutory services and Regulators.

### **Reporting and Responding to Concerns Regarding other Parties**

Safeguarding concerns should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer. However, you may prefer to speak in the first instance to your Primary point of Contact. The Primary point of Contact must immediately inform the Designated Safeguarding Officer in order to ensure that appropriate organisational action is also taken where relevant.

If the safeguarding concern is about an individual's Primary point of Contact or if for any reason the individual does not feel comfortable raising their concern directly or in person with the Designated Safeguarding Officer, then safeguarding concerns should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer via the dedicated Safeguarding email address [secretary@adch.org.uk](mailto:secretary@adch.org.uk). The person raising the concern should give their name and contact details and as much information about their concern as possible to enable a comprehensive investigation. **If concerns are raised anonymously, they may be more difficult to investigate and as a result ADCH may be restricted in any actions that it can take.** Once the concern has been reported, the person who has reported it should keep the matter *strictly confidential* and should not seek to investigate it themselves or ask anyone else to investigate it for them as this may compromise ADCH's investigation.

To report any safeguarding concern, please read **Annex A ('Do's and Don't's When Dealing with Safeguarding Concern')**, complete **Annex C ('Safeguarding Concern Form – Other Parties')** and send by email to the ADCH Designated Safeguarding Officer ([secretary@adch.org.uk](mailto:secretary@adch.org.uk)).

The Designated Safeguarding Officer will review any concerns raised and arrange investigations/ take relevant action as necessary. This may involve talking to the person who has raised the concern to get more information. Safeguarding concerns raised relating to the behaviour of staff and volunteers with one another are likely to be investigated and decisions taken in accordance with ADCH's relevant internal policies.

The Chair and Finance, Governance & Risk Committee will have oversight of safeguarding at ADCH and will receive regular reports of any significant safeguarding incidents from the Designated Safeguarding Officer. They will report any key concerns to Trustees via a regular update at Board Meetings.

We are committed to reporting all relevant incidents to the Charity Commission via a Serious Incident Report and will also report safeguarding incidents to the police, and/or relevant safeguarding authorities where appropriate.

We will report anyone working directly with children and/or vulnerable adults in the course of their work with ADCH who are removed from volunteering or dismissed (or would have been if the person had not already left) as a result of a safeguarding incident to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

Reporting of safeguarding incidents to relevant external authorities will not be avoided on the basis that it may harm ADCH's reputation or give rise to litigation.

Any concerns in relation to data protection will not act as a barrier to reporting, although they will be carefully considered to ensure that the disclosure is made within the legal framework for so doing and appropriate legal advice will be sought on a case-by-case basis where this is necessary.

If you are not sure whether you should be reporting a concern under the Safeguarding Policy or another, please refer to the ADCH Framework for Raising Complaints/Concerns, the relevant Policies and/or take advice from the Designated Safeguarding Officer.

### **Policy Review**

This Policy will be reviewed by the Finance, Governance & Risk Committee annually. It may be reviewed and amended more frequently if there is a change in UK law and/or best practice, if there are relevant changes in our working practices or when an incident occurs that highlights a need for change

### **Contact information**

The ADCH's Designated Safeguarding Officer is the ADCH Secretary. Please report and send any safeguarding concerns to the designated email [secretary@ADCH.org.uk](mailto:secretary@ADCH.org.uk).

## DO'S AND DON'T'S WHEN DEALING WITH A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN

*For any Party that discloses that they are experiencing a Safeguarding concern, consider the following when reporting.*

DO	DON'T
Take what they say seriously	Panic
Remain calm and be supportive	Delay
Reassure them it was right to tell someone	Keep secrets or make promises to
Use language they understand and can relate to	Ask leading questions
Explain what will happen next ie relevant establishment/people will be informed	Express any personal opinions yourself of the situation
Write down series of events immediately after what was said, noting as much information as possible	Discuss the disclosure with anyone other than the relevant Safeguarding Board and your manager or nominated senior.
Raise the concern and inform your manager or nominated senior	Start to investigate yourself
Remember you may need support and seek advice	Get involved any further than noting down the incident in full and following the safeguarding procedure
Be honest and explain that you will have to tell someone else to help with the situation	Do not contact the alleged abuser

<b>SAFEGUARDING CONCERN FORM CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS</b>
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<b>Name of child/vulnerable adult:</b>	
<b>Date of birth (child/vulnerable adult):</b>	<b>Gender (M/F):</b>
<b>Time, location, date and any other relevant information:</b>	
<b>The child/vulnerable adult's account:</b>	
<b>Description of the safeguarding issue (including any visible signs or injuries):</b>	
<b>Any other observations/information:</b>	
<b>Witness(es) to the incident:</b>	
<b>Details of person alleged to have caused incident/injury – names address DOB or approx. age:</b>	
<b>Action taken (including who has been informed):</b>	
<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Name and position:</b>	<b>Time:</b>

<b>SAFEGUARDING CONCERN FORM OTHER PARTIES</b>
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<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Date of birth:</b>	<b>Gender (M/F):</b>
<b>Time, location, date and any other relevant information:</b>	
<b>Details of the account:</b>	
<b>Description of the safeguarding issue (including any visible signs or injuries):</b>	
<b>Any other observations/information:</b>	
<b>Witness(es) to the incident:</b>	
<b>Details of person alleged to have caused incident/injury – names address DOB or approx. age:</b>	
<b>Action taken (including who has been informed):</b>	
<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Name and position:</b>	<b>Time:</b>