

Safeguarding Procedure – Adults at Risk

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Audience:	All ADCH Staff, Trustees and Volunteers		
Owner:	Governance Committee	Author:	ADCH Central Team
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1. Purpose and Scope

This procedure provides guidance on the types of abuse the Association of Dogs and Cats Homes (ADCH) seeks to protect adults at risk from and is designed to show those who have concerns about possible abuse how to respond quickly, appropriately and sensitively to suspicions or disclosures of abuse.

This procedure applies to anyone working on behalf of ADCH, in an employed or voluntary capacity, including our staff, board of trustees, and volunteers.

2. Safeguarding Duties and Responsibilities

It is the duty and responsibility of everyone working on behalf of ADCH, including staff, trustees and volunteers, to be aware of the harm abuse can cause and report any safeguarding concerns they may have. All staff, trustees and volunteers must always follow ADCH Codes of Conduct when working on behalf of ADCH.

3. What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the process of protecting people's health, wellbeing, and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect. It involves identifying and responding to risks, promoting welfare, and ensuring that individuals, especially those who may be vulnerable, are safe in all interactions with an organisation. Emphasis is placed on the need to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults who are at greater risk of harm, abuse and neglect. Despite having limited direct contact with children, young people and adults at risk, ADCH is committed to safeguarding these groups, and all people we encounter as part of our charitable work.

This safeguarding procedure focuses on supporting and protecting adults who may be at particular risk of abuse due to their need for care and support. For ADCH this may include our volunteers, trustees and staff as well as those we work with as part of our charitable aims.

That is:

1. Anyone who is over the age of 18
2. Who is, or may be, in need of care and support because of mental or physical disability, age or illness.
3. Who is, or may be, unable to take care of himself or herself or is unable to protect themselves against harm caused by abuse.

4. Types of abuse and neglect

Listed below are the main different types of abuse and neglect we seek to protect adults at risk from.

For more detailed information on each type of abuse, how to recognise the signs of abuse and what you can do to help prevent and respond to abuse, please visit the [NHS website](#).

Physical abuse is deliberately hurting an adult at risk and causing physical harm.

Sexual abuse is any sexual activity or behaviour carried out without the adult's informed and voluntary consent, or where consent cannot be freely given. Consent must be clear, informed, and freely given. Any sexual activity without this consent (or where capacity is impaired) is abuse.

Psychological abuse is any act or behaviour that causes emotional distress, mental harm, or undermines an adult's sense of dignity and self-worth. Psychological abuse can occur in person, through written communication, or via digital means. Its impact may include anxiety, depression, loss of confidence, and reduced ability to protect oneself.

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet an adult's basic physical, emotional, or social needs, or to protect them from harm. It includes acts of omission or failure to act. Neglect can be deliberate or unintentional but always results in harm or risk of harm to the adult.

Financial abuse is the improper or unauthorised use of an adult's money, property, or resources. It can also include withdrawing financial support from an adult at risk who is dependent on that support for their basic needs with the withdrawal used to control, punish, or exploit them. Financial abuse can occur in person or through digital means and often results in loss of assets, increased vulnerability, and emotional distress.

It is important to remember abuse can take place in any relationship and there are many contexts in which abuse might take place, e.g. institutional abuse, domestic abuse, forced marriage, human trafficking, modern slavery, sexual exploitation, County Lines, radicalisation, hate crime, mate crime, cyberbullying and scams.

Adults at risk may experience harm in a family environment, or in an institution or community setting such as a place of employment or sports club. They may know the person who is abusing them or, more rarely, experience abuse from a stranger. Abuse can happen in person or online, or through a combination of the two. Adults at risk can also experience more than one type of abuse, and this can have serious and long-lasting impacts on their lives.

5. Reporting a Safeguarding Concern

Safeguarding concerns may arise when working on behalf of ADCH in a variety of ways including:

- Directly witnessing or hearing something
- Indirectly hearing about something from a third party
- Witnessing indicators and signs that an adult is (or is at risk of) being abused or neglected
- A disclosure from an adult at risk

If have any safeguarding concerns when working on behalf of ADCH, you should follow the following procedure to report your concern/s:

1. If the adult at risk is in immediate danger, call the police on 999.
2. If the adult at risk is not in immediate danger, ask for their consent to report your concerns. If you feel that they do not have capacity to consent, you can act without consent, but you must log your decision in your report. If consent is given, complete the [ADCH Safeguarding Concern Report Form](#) as soon as possible. The ADCH Safeguarding Concern Report Form (Adults) is an online, encrypted form which will gather information about the nature of a safeguarding concern and the details of the person submitting the concern. The form will be sent to ADCH's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Rebecca Cooper (ADCH Executive Director).

If your safeguarding concern involves the conduct of the DLS, you should instead [email](#) the Designated Safeguarding Lead Deputy, Giles Webber (Chair of Trustees) stating you wish to

discuss an urgent safeguarding concern involving the DSL and include your contact number. The DSL Deputy will phone you as soon as possible and take the details of your concern.

3. The DSL will send an email to the person who has reported a safeguarding concern via the ADCH Safeguarding Concern Report Form (Adults) to confirm receipt of the form.

If you have not received a confirmation email from the DSL within 12 hours, please [email](#) the DSL Deputy, Giles Webber, to inform him you have completed an ADCH Safeguarding Concern Report Form which has not been acknowledged. The DSL Deputy will then alert the DSL to your report form, and you will receive email confirmation from the DSL to confirm receipt of the form.

4. Once the ADCH Safeguarding Concern Report Form (Adults) has been received it will be reviewed, and where necessary referred, by the DSL. The DSL may contact you with any further questions they may have. It is important you keep your safeguarding concern confidential and only discuss it with the DSL and DSL Deputy.

6. Responding to a Disclosure from an Adult at Risk

The following points will give you some brief guidance on what to do if an adult at risk discloses a safeguarding concern to you.

- Listen carefully to what they're saying. Be patient and focus on what you're being told. Try not to express your own views and feelings. If you appear shocked or as if you don't believe them it could make them stop talking and take back what they've said.
- Don't confront the alleged abuser. Confronting the alleged abuser could make the situation worse for the adult at risk.
- Ask the adult at risk for consent to report what they have disclosed. If you feel that they do not have capacity to consent, you can act without consent, but you must explain this in your report. If someone is injured or at immediate risk, take immediate action. Seek help by dialling 999 for police or ambulance.
- Tell the person involved what you are going to do about the concern and note any views that they may have regarding how they wish the matter to be dealt with.
- Report what the adult at risk has told you as soon as possible following the above procedure. Report as soon after you've been told about the abuse so the details are fresh in your mind and action can be taken quickly. It can be helpful to take notes as soon after you've spoken to the adult at risk. Try to keep these as accurate as possible.

7. Key Contact Details

ADCH Safeguarding Concern Report Form

Contact:	Name:	Role:	Email Address:	Phone Number:
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Rebecca Cooper	ADCH Executive Director	rebecca@adch.org.uk	07759719802
Designated Safeguarding Lead Deputy	Giles Webber	ADCH Chair of Trustees	giles@adch.org.uk	07989013511

8. Data Storage and Retention

Records will be kept securely in accordance with ADCH's Data Retention and Disposal policy which states, *'Incidents and allegations relating to children, or adults at risk will be retained for 6 years from incident report or allegation. After 6 years files should be reviewed to ascertain risk associated with incident and decide whether longer retention period is required'*.

9. Concerns and Complaints

If you are unhappy about ADCH has dealt with a safeguarding concern you have raised, please refer to [ADCH's Complaints Policy](#) and/or [ADCH's Whistleblowing Policy](#).

10. Procedure Review

This procedure will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes in legislation or safeguarding guidance.

Version History

Version	Changes Made	Date	Made by
V1	Policy Approved	2026	Board of Trustees