

Safeguarding Procedure – Responding to a Safeguarding Concern

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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 outlines how the Association of Dogs and Cats Homes (ADCH) will respond when a safeguarding concern is reported. It explains the steps the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will take to review, assess and respond to safeguarding concerns involving children, young people, or adults at risk.

This procedure applies to all safeguarding concerns reported through ADCH's Safeguarding Concern Report Form or raised directly with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL.

2. Safeguarding Responsibilities

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has overall responsibility for managing safeguarding concerns reported to ADCH.

The DSL will:

- Receive and review safeguarding concerns
- Assess the level of risk and urgency
- Decide whether the concern should be referred to relevant authorities
- Maintain appropriate records of safeguarding concerns
- Ensure appropriate action is taken to safeguard individuals
- Escalate safeguarding risks to the Board of Trustees where necessary

The Deputy DSL will support the DSL and will manage concerns where the allegation involves the DSL.

3. Receiving a Safeguarding Concern

Safeguarding concerns may be received through:

- The ADCH Safeguarding Concern Report Form
- Direct contact with the DSL or Deputy DSL
- Reports from ADCH members, partners, or external organisations

When a safeguarding concern is received, the DSL will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the concern where possible.
- Review the information provided.
- Determine whether the individual involved may be at risk of harm.

If the concern indicates immediate risk, emergency services may be contacted.

4. Assessing the Concern

The DSL will review the information available and assess:

- The nature of the safeguarding concern
- The level of risk to the individual involved
- Whether a child, young person or adult at risk may be experiencing abuse or neglect
- Whether the concern relates to activities connected to ADCH
- The DSL may contact the person who submitted the report to request additional information if needed.

All safeguarding concerns will be treated seriously and handled sensitively and confidentially.

5. Referral to External Authorities

Where appropriate, the DSL may refer the concern to relevant safeguarding authorities or services.

These may include:

- Local authority safeguarding teams / Social services
- Police
- Other relevant safeguarding bodies

As ADCH operates across the UK, Ireland, Isle of Man and the Channel Islands, safeguarding concerns may fall under different legal jurisdictions. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will ensure that referrals are made to the appropriate safeguarding authority for the location in which the concern arises.

Location	Safeguarding authority
England	Local Authority Safeguarding Team / Social Services
Wales	Local Authority Safeguarding Team
Scotland	Local Authority Social Work Department
Northern Ireland	Health and Social Care Trust
Republic of Ireland	Tusla – Child and Family Agency
Isle of Man	Isle of Man Safeguarding Board
Jersey / Guernsey	Local safeguarding partnership / social services

6. Record Keeping

All safeguarding concerns will be recorded and stored securely.

Records will include:

- Details of the concern reported
- Actions taken by ADCH
- Any referrals made to external authorities
- Any follow-up actions or outcomes
- Records will be stored securely in accordance with ADCH's Data Retention and Disposal Policy.

7. Confidentiality

Safeguarding concerns must be treated confidentially.

Information will only be shared with individuals or organisations who need to know in order to safeguard the individual involved.

Staff, trustees and volunteers must not discuss safeguarding concerns outside of the appropriate reporting process.

8. Monitoring and Learning

Where safeguarding concerns arise, ADCH may review the circumstances to identify any learning that may improve safeguarding practice.

This may include:

- Reviewing policies or procedures
- Identifying training needs
- Updating safeguarding guidance for staff and volunteers

9. 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	Procedure developed	2025	Executive Director
V1	Procedure approved	24/03/2026	Board of Trustees