

Safeguarding Policy

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Introduction

Doorstep Library recognises that all individuals have the right to protection from harm and abuse, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief and sexual orientation or identity.

As a children's charity, our commitment to protect, promote and safeguard the welfare of children is at the heart of everything that we do and we expect all of our trustees, employees, volunteers and anyone associated with the charity to share this commitment and recognise our collective responsibility to safeguard others.

This document details how Doorstep Library embeds a safeguarding culture within the organisation and manages its safeguarding responsibilities when delivering its services, at home and online, to the children and families it supports.

We are committed to having in place safeguarding practices and procedures which comply with up to date legislative and statutory responsibilities and guidelines in England; government and Charity Commission guidance, and which embed best practice in its culture. These documents are listed below and include specific procedures to be observed when delivering services at home and online. Volunteers, staff and trustees are expected to be familiar with them and comply with them at all times

- Safeguarding Statement
- Safeguarding– The 4 R's (Recognising, Responding, Recording and Reporting)
- Safeguarding Definitions and Signs of Abuse
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Online Safeguarding Policy
- Social and Digital Media Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Anti-Bullying & Harassment

The Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for the annual review of this policy and, through the CEO and Senior Management Team, that it is implemented at an operational level.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to

- share how we address and promote safeguarding as an organisation
- establish a consistent approach to using our safeguarding procedures
- define our safeguarding roles and responsibilities
- assure procedural clarity and accountability
- reinforce the nature of trusted relationships to prevent an abuse of power
- define the safeguarding terms central to our policy

Whom does this policy apply to?

This policy applies to all employees, trustees, volunteers, associates or other stakeholders working for, with or representing Doorstep Library, who share a collective responsibility for safeguarding the charity's beneficiaries.

All relevant stakeholders will be required to familiarise themselves and comply with the policy before working for, with or representing Doorstep Library.

Definitions in this policy

Abuse

A deliberate or non-deliberate act of ill-treatment that can harm or is likely to harm a person's safety, wellbeing and development. Abuse can take many forms, such as physical, sexual, emotional, neglect or exploitation.

Adult at Risk

Adults aged 18 and over have the potential to be 'at risk' (temporarily or permanently) for various reasons in different situations, including:

- Learning or physical disability
- Physical or mental illness
- Reduction in physical or mental capacity
- Receipt of any form of healthcare or community services
- Detention in custody
- Inability to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation

Child/children

Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. It also includes unborn children ([Children Act, 1989](#)).

Low-Level Concerns

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult has acted in a way that is inconsistent with the staff/volunteer code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work; and/or doesn't meet the threshold of harm or is not considered serious enough to refer to the local authority.

Neglect

Abuse which can be defined as failing to provide or secure a child or adult at risk with the basic needs required for physical safety and wellbeing. See [Safeguarding Definitions and Signs of Abuse](#) for more information on the different types and signs of abuse.

'Notes of interest'

A note of interest is a concern about the welfare of a child or adult at risk that may not indicate abuse on its own, but which nonetheless may add valuable information to a wider context or pattern of abuse.

Safeguarding

The action taken to promote the welfare of children and adults at risk and to protect them from harm. It also relates to protecting the organisation and all those working or volunteering within it.

Safeguarding children

- protecting children from maltreatment
- preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

[\(Working Together to Safeguard Children, 2018\)](#)

Safeguarding Team

Those with designated responsibilities for safeguarding within Doorstep Library, namely the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) and Safeguarding Trustee. Contact details are in Appendix 1.

Stakeholders

Doorstep Library 'stakeholders' are trustees, employees (staff), volunteers, freelance consultants and associates

Safeguarding Principles

We believe that:

- nobody who is involved in our work should ever experience abuse, harm, neglect or exploitation
- we all have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all of our beneficiaries, staff and volunteers, to keep them safe and to work in a way that protects them
- we all have a collective responsibility for creating a culture in which our people not only feel safe, but also able to speak up, if they have any concerns

Governance

The Board of Trustees has a governing responsibility to ensure that appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place, are effective at operational level and that they take the necessary actions as trustees when necessary. A safeguarding trustee with a background in safeguarding will be appointed and will work closely with SMT and the DSL, reporting up to the Board and cascading down to staff, so that there is no disconnect between operations and governance.

All trustees, as part of their induction, will be made aware of and will comply with the Charity Commission guidance on [safeguarding and protecting people](#) and the [10 actions trustee boards need to take](#) to ensure good safeguarding governance.

The Trustees have a responsibility to report serious safeguarding incidents (suspected or actual).

Trustees should report a suspected or actual serious incident to the Charity Commission by email at RSI@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk if:

- beneficiaries have been, or are alleged to have been, abused or mistreated while under the care of Doorstep Library, or by someone connected with Doorstep Library, for example a trustee, staff member or volunteer
- there has been an incident where someone has been abused or mistreated (alleged or actual) and this is connected with Doorstep Library's activities
- there has been a breach of procedures or policies at Doorstep Library which has put beneficiaries at risk, including a failure to carry out checks which would have identified that a person is disqualified under safeguarding legislation from working with children or adults. In this case action should be taken immediately to
 - prevent or minimise any further harm
 - report it to the police, if it is suspected a crime has been committed, and to any other regulators the charity is accountable to
 - plan what to say to staff, volunteers, members, the public and the media
 - review what happened and prevent it from happening again - this may include strengthening internal controls and procedures, and/or seeking appropriate help from professional advisers.

Code of Conduct

Doorstep Library expects all stakeholders – trustees, employees and volunteers - to be aware of the charity's [Code of Conduct](#) and adhere to the standards of behaviour laid out therein.

Any breach of this policy may lead to disciplinary action and/or dismissal from post. A referral may also be made to the relevant statutory agencies such as the local authority [children's social care](#), police or [Charity Commission](#).

Training

All new trustees, employees and volunteers will be required to complete safeguarding induction training, regardless of whether they have direct contact with children. This will include:

- an overview of the charity's safeguarding policies and principles
- expectations, standards and conduct expected within their role
- identifying indicators of the abuse or neglect of children
- procedures for responding to concerns, including appropriate levels of confidentiality
- clear procedures for reporting concerns or allegations, including the identity of designated safeguarding individuals

Additional induction training will be delivered to trustees and frontline employees specific to their roles and responsibilities.

All trustees, employees and volunteers will receive refresher safeguarding training annually at a level appropriate to their roles and responsibilities.

Responsibilities and Initial Reporting Procedures

The Safeguarding Team comprises of specific individuals with delegated roles.

- **Designated Safeguarding Lead** – Katie Bareham, CEO, who has overall responsibility for safeguarding matters

Any concerns about the safeguarding of children or adults at risk should be raised with the DSL (or DDSLs) as soon as practicably possible. If the concern relates to the DSL or DDSLs, this should be raised with the Safeguarding Trustee.

All Doorstep Library stakeholders – trustees, staff and volunteers - have a responsibility to ensure the safety of children and adults at risk and be aware of their requirements within these procedures. They must be appropriately trained and be familiar with supporting documents

- [Safeguarding – The 4 R's](#) (Recognising, Responding, Reporting, Recording)
- [Definitions and Signs of Abuse](#).

Any suspicions that a child or adult at risk is being harmed by experiencing, or already has experienced, abuse or neglect and/or is likely to suffer harm in the future, must be reported to the DSL or member of the Safeguarding Team as soon as practicably possible, and within 24 hours at the latest.

In the rare exception that no member of the Safeguarding Team is available, this must not deter appropriate action being taken. Advice can be sought from any member of the Senior Management Team, Trustee Board, the police or children's social care. Phone numbers for the relevant social care team can be found in Appendix 2 at the end of this policy, or via [this link](#). When an external emergency referral is made, the DSL (or a deputy) should be informed as soon as possible.

If there is an immediate danger to a child or adult at risk, or they require immediate medical treatment, **they should call the police and/or emergency medical services on 999 straight away**, before informing the DSL.

The person reporting the concern must record the details in writing as soon as required, and within 24 hours at the latest. A Safeguarding Logging Form is available in the following places:

- at project bases
- on the database dashboard
- in the staff Sharepoint portal (Safeguarding Hub)

It will also be emailed to the person making the report. This is used to factually record the concerns or observations, and is to be returned to the DSL (or a deputy) promptly. Any initial notes must also be passed on.

It is not the responsibility of Doorstep Library to decide if abuse has taken place and the charity has no powers to investigate abuse. It is the responsibility of staff at Doorstep Library to act if there is cause for concern so the appropriate agencies can investigate and take any action necessary to protect the young person or adult at risk. Serious incidents will also be reported to the Charity Commission.

Reporting Low-Level Concerns and 'Notes of Interest'

It is the responsibility of all stakeholders to report any low-level concerns or notes of interest to the DSL (or deputies). Individual concerns may build a picture of something that is happening in a child's life, which is why having a single point of contact and mechanism for recording and reviewing these ensures that a more serious concern does not go unnoticed.

This includes self-referrals, where a situation could be misconstrued, in order to protect trustees, staff and volunteers.

Allegations against staff and volunteers

Any breach of policy, suspicion, allegation or actual abuse of a child or adult at risk by an employee, volunteer, trustee or any other stakeholder must be reported immediately to the DSL or a deputy.

Concerns about or allegations against staff and volunteers will be taken seriously and dealt with promptly and sensitively, with the welfare of the child or adult at risk put first. This includes any breaches of policy or low-level concerns, whether intentional or unintentional.

If there are concerns abuse has taken place, the DSL will pass this information to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for investigation, who are the independent agency dealing with allegations against adults who work with children. The DSL will work closely with the LADO when requested to do so. The DSL will also work with the member of staff or volunteer's line manager, CEO and Safeguarding Trustee to decide whether the member of staff should be suspended pending a full investigation. Comprehensive records will be kept, and every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality of all parties.

Whistleblowing

Trustees, staff and volunteers should feel confident about challenging the behaviour of others and voicing concerns. If a member of staff is dissatisfied with the response they receive from the organisation, or feel unable to report an incident, then other avenues are open to them. They should refer to Doorstep Library's [Whistleblowing Policy](#), [Complaints Policy](#) and can also contact the NSPCC Whistleblowing Advice Line on 0800 028 0285 or help@nspcc.org.uk.

Safer Recruitment

Doorstep Library is committed to safer recruitment from the outset in order to deter, identify or reject candidates who may have intent to abuse children or adults at risk. Under no circumstances will Doorstep Library appoint a person considered a risk to children, regardless of whether or not direct contact with children is part of their role.

Robust safer recruitment practices, in accordance with the charity's [Safer Recruitment policy](#), must be followed for all trustees, staff and volunteers working at Doorstep Library, prior to appointment. This also applies to roles that do not have direct contact with children and/or adults at risk, at appropriate levels.

An appropriate DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check will be processed and renewed every 3 years at a minimum. Direct work with children will be suspended until renewal is complete. Where a criminal conviction is disclosed by an applicant or through a DBS check, it will be referred to the DSL and/or the Senior Management Team for objective consideration, and in compliance with the DBS Code of Practice to avoid unfair discrimination. Doorstep Library undertakes regulated activity with children, and is aware it is a criminal offence to knowingly employ a person barred by the DBS to work with children. It is a stakeholder's responsibility to disclose any reasons why they should not be working with children to the DSL immediately.

Where concerns are noticed or raised either throughout the recruitment process or during appointment, if it is considered that the level of risk is too high to allow the individual to start/continue working in a particular role/activity, possible outcomes may include the offer of employment/volunteering being rescinded, amended duties, redeployment, or dismissal.

All staff will be adequately trained on Safer Recruitment procedures both during the recruitment process and as part of Doorstep Library's ongoing culture of safeguarding.

Confidentiality and sharing information

It is important all concerns are properly recorded in writing whether further action is taken or not. Concerns raised must be recorded accurately and in detail on the Doorstep Library Logging Form by the person making the report (see above) and/or on the Safeguarding Incident Log by the person receiving the report. All discussions should end with clear and explicit recorded agreement about who will be taking what action. Where no further action is the outcome, the reason for this should be clearly recorded.

Records will be kept securely with restricted access. The DSL and DDSLs have a responsibility in maintaining the confidentiality of these records and must ensure that the records, or any information they contain, are made available only to relevant parties. The transfer of information will be done in such a way that confidentiality is maintained.

Data processing and retention must be compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and [Data Protection Act 2018](#), and Doorstep Library's [Data Protection Policy](#). Destruction of data relating to concerns about a child's welfare and safety, and/or concerns about possible risks posed by people working or volunteering with children, will comply with this policy.

While personal information held by professionals and agencies is subject to a legal duty of confidence and should not normally be disclosed without the subject's consent, it is essential staff respond quickly where they have concerns or suspicions of abuse. Any concerns about confidentiality should not override the rights of children and/or adults at risk of suffering harm

and, where necessary to protect welfare, Doorstep Library will breach confidentiality to raise concerns.

Online Safeguarding

Doorstep Library is committed to keeping children safe at all times throughout our online activities. We strive to create an environment which ensures that, during online Doorstep Library sessions, staff, volunteers, parents/carers, children, young people and adults at risk are protected from harm.

Online Reading Sessions

Trustees, staff and volunteers must read and adhere to procedures in our [Online Safeguarding Policy](#) when conducting online reading sessions with families, which outlines all safety features and protocol in relation to our online platform, expected behaviour and conduct, and reporting concerns. This protects all stakeholders, and breaches of policy will be treated as a safeguarding concern and recorded as such.

The online platform Doorstep Library uses to conduct online reading sessions is Zoom. Various safety features are in place, as outlined in the Online Safeguarding Policy, and must be stringently followed.

Presence on websites and social media

Trustees, staff and volunteers must read and adhere to our [Social and Digital Media Policy](#) and [Code of Conduct](#), and take care when communicating with others online, particularly when identifying themselves as Doorstep Library trustees, staff or volunteers and when in contact with children and adults at risk or representing the organisation. They must never make or accept connection requests to or from parents or children on any personal social media platforms.

Photography and image sharing

Volunteer and employees must never record or take screenshots or photographs of an online or in-person reading session. In certain circumstances content may be required for marketing purposes; however this will strictly follow Doorstep Library protocol as specified in the Photo and Video Consent Forms and [Privacy Policy](#), and must only be undertaken on instruction from Doorstep Library staff and after a consent form has been obtained from the parent or carer.

Policy Review

Doorstep Library is committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually, and on a continual basis where needed.

This policy was last reviewed on:

.....15/11/22.....(date)

Signed 

Safeguarding trustee

Date: 22 November 2022

Appendix 1 Contact details

In the event of any safeguarding concern or query, contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If the Designated Safeguarding Lead is absent or unavailable, contact another member of the Safeguarding Team as appropriate.

Name	Title	Phone numbers	Email
Lead: Katie Bareham	CEO	07557 790925 (9am-6pm Mon-Fri) or 07836 250134 (if unavailable or outside of working hours)	katie@doorsteplibrary.org.uk
Trustee: Liz Dawson	Safeguarding Trustee	07775591282	safeguardingtrustee@doorsteplibrary.org.uk

Appendix 2: Useful numbers

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline (24 hours)

To report or discuss concerns about a child's welfare. Tel: 0808 800 5000 or textphone: 0800 056 0566 or email: help@nspcc.org.uk

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP)

Report a concern that a child is being sexually abused or groomed online at www.ceop.police.uk

Local Social Services Child Protection teams:

- Camden - LBCMASHadmin@camden.gov.uk or tel: 020 7974 3317 / out of hours service: 020 7974 4444
- Hammersmith & Fulham - familyservices@lbhf.gov.uk or tel: 020 8753 6600 / out of hours service: 020 8748 8588
- Lambeth – helpandprotection@lambeth.gov.uk or tel: 020 7926 5555
- Westminster - accesstochildrenservices@westminster.gov.uk or tel: 020 7641 4000 / out of hours service: 020 7641 2388
- List of contact details for all boroughs:
https://www.londonsafeguardingchildrenprocedures.co.uk/p_list_lscp.html
Or
<https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>