Down Syndrome Training & Support Service LTD

Registered Charity No.1130994

A company registered in England and Wales number 6915555

Volunteer Handbook



Charity Details

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Welcome!

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with the Down Syndrome Training and Support Service (DSTSS). In joining our charity, you will be helping to further our mission, to build a better future for children and young people with Down syndrome in the district and beyond. As a registered charity, we rely on our volunteers to help us continue to deliver a high quality service to the children and families who attend our sessions – we greatly appreciate you choosing to contribute your time and efforts to help us keep achieving our goals.

It is really important to us, that our volunteers know how valuable they are to the DSTSS. This handbook is here to address any concerns you may have about volunteering, your role and responsibilities, what we expect of you and what you can expect of us. Please do not hesitate to talk to any of the team if you have any questions. The handbook is not intended to be your only guide!

Lastly, we cannot thank you enough for helping to make a positive difference to the lives of children and young people with Down syndrome

About Us

Our People

We are a team of dedicated individuals, some of us are paid employees and some of us are volunteers. Many of the team have immediate relatives with Down syndrome, but there are several who do not. We are all dedicated to our work, and we all believe in promoting better access to support services and improving the public perception and understanding of Down syndrome.

Our Aim

Our aim is to improve the education, development and inclusion of children with Down syndrome. We pursue this goal through a variety of activities and interventions, which are outlined below.

Our Objectives

- To assist in the care of children with Down syndrome by the provision of support, advice and training to those responsible for their care and to health and educational specialists, with the aim of improving the health and education of children with Down syndrome.
- To provide support, training and relief to families who care for children with Down syndrome.
- To promote awareness of Down syndrome
- To organise regular sessions open to all families of children with Down syndrome and other events.
- To provide a library of informative and educational items, including producing newsletters, booklets, posters etc.
- To liaise with health and education professionals and provide training.
- To train parents and helpers through courses and conferences for the benefit of the entire group as well as the individual families
- To promote the charity to the general public and our local community

What We Do

- We deliver Early Development Groups for children with Down syndrome aged 12 months to 5/6 years of age and their parents and school support staff
- We deliver a range of training courses in the specific learning needs of children with Down syndrome. As a volunteer you are welcome to attend these courses. The Introduction to Down Syndrome and the Signing for children with Down syndrome may be particularly useful
- A weekly youth club, the WisH Club, for young people 11+
- Weekly dance sessions for children aged 5-11 and young people aged 11+
- Monthly speech and language group sessions
- A monthly family Saturday session
- A monthly Sibz Saturday session for brothers and sisters 6+
- A work placement project – "I can work"
- A 10 week Independent living project
- A monthly newsletter
- Counselling
- A library of resources
- Day trips

Meet Out amazing team



Wendy Uttley
Manager & Trainer



Jenn Casper-Smith
Manager & Early Support Practitioner



Heidi Grosvenor
Deputy Manager



Laura Hempel
Early Years & Family Support Practitioner



Karen Barron
Family Support, Officer & Housekeeper



Georgina Edwards
Finance Officer



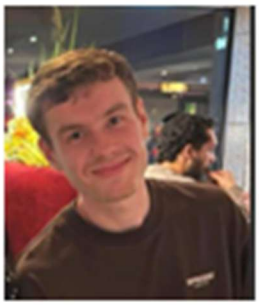
Nicky Major
Adult Support & Charity Shop Manager



Kate Coates
Social Media Officer



Sarah Bentley
Youth Club Coordinator



Jake Scott
Youth Club Assistant



Fran Shaw
Youth Club Assistant



Jo Higgins
Office Cleaner

How you can get involved

Volunteer Job Roles

We have a variety of opportunities for volunteers to contribute to our work. Below is a list of some of the roles available, along with the accompanying job descriptions.

1. Family Saturday Session Volunteer Helper
2. Youth Club Volunteer Helper
3. Charity Shop Volunteer Helper
4. Volunteer Fundraiser/Fundraising at Events
5. Early Development Group Volunteer
6. Volunteer Administrator

1. Family Saturday Session Volunteer Helper

Usually Second Saturday of the month (8:45am – 1:00pm)

Job Description:

- To play with and support the children on a one to one basis.
- To play with the children in a group activity.
- To be comfortable introducing parents to the activities, when desired.
- To help set up activities, if you're able to arrive by 9.00am.
- To tidy up after activities and keep the toys clean.
- To help with washing up.
- To help keep kitchen clean and tidy.

2. Youth Club Volunteer Helper

Friday (6:00pm – 9:00pm)

Job Description:

- To help deliver our weekly youth club for young people with Down syndrome aged 11+.
- To interact with the young people, to encourage them to engage with activities and socialise amongst themselves appropriately.
- To oversee the safety of the people in attendance, by ensuring correct use of equipment and safe interpersonal interaction.
- Training in behaviour management, safeguarding and appropriate touch is compulsory and will be provided.
- A Touch Policy will be provided for you to read in addition to the policies in this handbook.

3. Charity Shop Volunteer Helper

Various Hours, including weekends.

Job Description:

- Help with sorting and pricing donations
- Working on the shop floor
- Sorting and tiding the shop

4. **Volunteer Fundraiser**

Various Hours, including weekends.

Job Description:

- To be a fundraising champion for our charity
- To help at events, staff stalls, run tombola's etc.
- Help with handing out collection tins to local businesses.
- Follow up on collection tins
- Look for fundraising opportunities
- Undertake sponsored events on our behalf to raise funds

5. **Early Development Group Volunteer**

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday (9:30am - 12:30pm approx.)

Job Description:

- To help with preparation of resources for groups, including: photocopying, laminating, cutting and sticking.
- To help set up the space for early development groups.
- To support the practitioner in the delivery of the early development group session.
- To help with kitchen duties, this includes: washing up, making drinks, and tidying up after groups.
- If comfortable, to work on a computer to prepare relevant documents, such as leaflets and reports.
- If you are available, to occasionally provide support in crèches when necessary.

6. **Volunteer Administrator**

Flexible Hours (usually during school hours)

Job Description:

- To help with preparation of resources for groups, including: photocopying, laminating, cutting and sticking.
- To help with kitchen duties, this includes: washing up, making drinks and tidying up after groups.
- To prepare outgoing mail for postage (stuffing envelopes, franking, stamping, etc.). Includes taking mail to the post office.
- To work on a computer to prepare relevant documents, such as leaflets and reports.

Our expectations and what you can expect from us

What is a volunteer?
Volunteers may be described as individuals who put their experience, knowledge, and skills at the disposal of the charity, free of charge, with the primary aim of helping the charity to achieve its aims and objectives and/or with the primary aim of bringing some benefit to the local community. In this sense, Volunteers are to be distinguished from student and other work placements where the primary aim is usually for the student to obtain certain work experience or to carry out work or research in certain areas. Volunteering is non-obligational; a volunteer is allowed to refuse hours of work.

Recruitment of Volunteers
Volunteers will be expected to complete an application form, attend an informal interview, supply two referees, undertake basic safeguarding training, and apply for a DBS. Don't worry we will help you with these steps. See page 10.

Our policies
Because we work with vulnerable children and adults there are a number of safeguarding policies that you need to read. They are all included in this handbook:

Child protection policy, vulnerable adults' policy, confidentiality policy, social media policy and safeguarding procedures and our touch policy. You will be asked to sign a receipt to confirm that they have read and understood them.

Expenses
Volunteers will be entitled to travel expenses up to the value of a daily travel card (second class fare). Subsistence allowance of up to £4.00 may be claimed for lunch if working 4 hours or more. Expenses claim forms should be submitted on a weekly or monthly basis along with valid receipts as evidence of expenditure.

Mileage Allowance:

	First 10,000 miles	10,001 plus miles
Cars and vans	45p	25p
Motorcycles	24p	15p
Bicycles	20p	20P

Insurance
Volunteers will be covered by the Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd.'s employers' public liability, professional indemnity where appropriate, and personal accident insurance. If their car is used for business during working hours their car must be insured for business use, and this must be arranged by the volunteer.

Training and Involvement
Volunteers can attend any of our training for FREE. We particularly recommend they download or attend Introduction to Down syndrome and the Signing and children with Down syndrome courses.

Other training such as safeguarding/health & safety training is also recommended but will have to be done in their own time. Anything other, eg First Aid, planning meetings etc this needs to be documented and justified. Volunteers can ask to be sign posted to relevant training opportunities.

If things aren't going well!

Where appropriate, the role and placement of the Volunteer may be terminated by the Manager at one week's notice, or immediately, where behaviour equivalent to gross misconduct has occurred. In all cases the Volunteer will be entitled to an explanation of the decision and action taken. The volunteer is also entitled to appeal, give their own explanations, and argue their own case, with support/representation if requested. The Manager will report any such terminations to the Directors of the Board.

Volunteers will not be subject to the Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd.'s disciplinary procedures. Correspondingly, Volunteers will not have access to the Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd.'s grievance procedures. However, Volunteers will be entitled to use the Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd.'s Complaints Procedure. Where appropriate, the complaint will be investigated fully by the Manager or her/his representative.

Registering for online application for DBS check

We require all our staff and volunteers to have a DBS check (formerly called CRB). If you already have one from another place of work we can accept that if it is under three years old and covers both child and vulnerable adults. If not, you will need to complete an application online.

Go to www.dbsassist.co.uk/ucheck

1) Click on DBS Application Form – "start application"

2) Enter organisation reference – **DOWN6** (capital letters)

3) Enter password – downsix (lower case)

4) Click Login

The first page to appear will be the Statement of Fair Processing which you need to tick at the bottom of the page to confirm

5) The blank application will then appear

Complete the application using the notes on the right hand side of the screen for guidance

Please don't use the term "Volunteer". Your job is "support worker CA" working with "Child and vulnerable adults". This enables us to clear you to be used as a volunteer in any of our activities. If you don't want to be cleared to work with vulnerable adults, it may restrict how we can use you, but it is by no means obligatory.

6) Click on the box to indicate consent

7) Click on complete

8) Click home

Then you're finished. Let us know via phone (01274 561308) or email (office@downsyndromebradford.co.uk) and we will complete the verification process using the details we have taken from your ID. **If we haven't seen your ID, we will need to see and photocopy two of the following documents 1) your passport, 2) driving licence and / or 3) birth certificate. we will also need to see a recent, less than three months old, bank statement / council tax bill / for confirmation of your address**

Should you have any problems with the online DBS application feel free to call and we can arrange for you to come to the office for support in completing the form.

Registering for online Safeguarding training via HighSpeed Training.

In the absence of any proof of previous Safeguarding Training, all volunteers are required to complete "Introduction to Safeguarding Children level 1, via HighSpeed Training. They will need to retake this online course every two years as a refresher.

You will be reminded when your update is due to be taken.

In order to complete the required Safeguarding Training, you will receive an email from HighSpeed Training which will contain your unique username and password. Heidi Grosvenor will also email you with you with confirmation of your log in details.

1. Got to www.highspeedtraining.co.uk
2. Click log in the top right corner
3. Input username and password and click log in
4. Under 'Active Training' click 'Continue Course'
5. Work through modules by clicking start modules

You can continue with the course there and then should you so wish or go back to it at a later date. The course must be completed within 6 weeks of registering. The course doesn't need to be completed in one sitting and progress can be saved.

Once you have completed the course and taken the short quiz, please print the certificate and forward it to heidigrovenor@downsyndromebradford.co.uk as proof of training completion.

You are very welcome to come to the office and complete the course here should you require support or assistance.

The policies you need to read

The rest of this booklet is devoted to providing information that must be understood by any individual who wishes to volunteer with us. These policies are related to best practice, and all the information is important to ensuring that all staff and volunteers are all fully aware of their legal obligations and how to maintain a safe environment for other staff, volunteers and for the children under our supervision.

You MUST read these documents in their entirety, before you are legally allowed to start volunteering with the DSTSS. It is your responsibility to complete this process, before you come to work with us.

The policies herein are:

- Confidentiality Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Social Media & E-Safety Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy
- Touch Policy

It is your responsibility (as well as ours) to confirm that you have both read and understood the implications of these documents. You are required to sign a statement that you have fully read these policies. At the end of the handbook is a form to sign and return to us once you've read all the policies.

Lastly, please do not hesitate to ask if you are struggling to understand any of the information included within these policies. We acknowledge that there is a lot to digest, and we are here to help if necessary!

Thank you!

Confidentiality Policy

Employees and workers (including volunteers, temporary, agency, contractors, and consultants) of Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd must always be aware of the importance of maintaining confidentiality of information gained by them during the course of their duties. This will in many cases include access to personal information relating to service users. Staff must treat all information in a discreet and confidential manner, and particular attention is drawn to the following:-

1. Information regarding service users must not be disclosed either orally or in writing to unauthorized persons. It is particularly important that staff should ensure the authenticity of telephone enquiries.

2. Written records, computer records and correspondence pertaining to any personal information gained during the Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd's activities must be kept secure at all times.

3. You have an obligation to ensure that computer systems which you use are protected from inappropriate access within your direct area of practice e.g., by ensuring that they are protected by personal access codes and that the codes are kept secure.

4. All data held, its management and procedures must conform to the requirements of the Data Protection Act (1998). Under the Act, service users and staff have a right to access to their records on application to the appropriate manager.

5. Sometimes confidentiality can be broken, for example in relation to the safety and protection of children or vulnerable adults. If it is appropriate to share information gained in the course of your work, with other education, health, or social work practitioners, you must make sure that, as far as is reasonable, this information will be kept in strict professional confidence and be used only for the purpose for which the information was given.

6. Conversations relating to confidential matters affecting clients should not take place in situations where they may be overheard/read by passers-by, e.g., in corridors, reception areas, lifts and cloak rooms, Facebook, Twitter.

7. The same confidentiality must also be preserved in dealing with work related matters appertaining to work colleagues.

8. Any breach of confidentiality may be regarded as misconduct or gross misconduct and may be subject to disciplinary action.

Date of review: June 2025

Date of next review: June 2026

Code of Conduct

Why it is essential that you read our code of conduct

All members of staff (including volunteers) are expected to follow a specific code of conduct, which is there to mutually protect the children, young people, and staff. When caring for other people's children, you are in a position of trust, and you have a responsibility to know how to behave appropriately in this capacity. Whilst the vast majority of the rules are common sense, DST&SS would rather specify anything which constitutes unacceptable practise, in order to reduce the risk of potential harm to the children and to you and our volunteers.

Code of Conduct for all Staff and Volunteers

Always remember that while you are caring for other people's children you are in a position of trust and your responsibilities to them, and the organisation must be uppermost in your mind at all times.

Do Not:

- Use any kind of physical punishment or chastisement such as smacking or hitting
- Smoke in front of any child
- Use non-prescribed drugs or be under the influence of alcohol
- Behave in a way that frightens or demeans any child
- Use any racist, sexist, discriminatory or offensive language
- Invite a child to your home or arrange to see them outside the set activity times
- Engage in any sexual activity (this would include using sexualised language) with a child you meet through your duties or start a personal relationship with them, this would be an abuse of trust
- Engage in rough or physical games, including horseplay
- Let allegations a child makes go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon
- Rely upon good nature to protect you or believe "it could never happen to me"
- Give children presents or personal items *

**(Exceptions to this could be a custom such as: buying children a small birthday token or leaving present, help to a family in need such as equipment to enable them to participate in an activity. Both types of gift should come from the organisation and from a professional capacity and be agreed with the named person for safeguarding children and the child's parent/carer. Similarly, do not accept gifts yourself other than small tokens for appropriate celebrations, which you should mention to the activity leader.)*

Do:

- Exercise caution about being alone with a child. In situations where this is unavoidable, ensure another worker or volunteer knows what you are doing and where you are.
- Ensure that any physical contact is open and initiated by the child's needs, e.g. for a hug when upset or help with toileting. Always prompt children to carry out personal care themselves and if they cannot manage ask if they would like help
- Talk explicitly to children about their right to be kept safe from harm
- Listen to children and take every opportunity to raise their self esteem

- Work as a team with your co-workers/volunteers. Agree with them what behaviour you expect from children and be consistent in enforcing it
- Remember if you have to speak to a child about their behaviour you are challenging 'what they did', not 'who they are'
- Make sure you have read the organisations' Child Protection Procedures and that you feel confident that you know how to recognise when a child may be suffering harm, how to handle any disclosures and how to report any concerns
- Seek advice and support from your colleagues and your designated champion for safeguarding children
- Be clear with anyone disclosing any matter that could concern the safety and wellbeing of a child that you cannot guarantee to keep this information to yourself
- Seek opportunities for training
- Where possible encourage parents to take responsibility for their own children
- Make sure you are clear about your organisations' Confidentiality Policy and Bradford's Local Area Information Sharing Protocol.

Social Media & E Safety Policy

Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd believes that social media is an important form of communicating. Web content created through collaboration on blogs, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Zoom and other online technologies make it easier for employees to identify, meet, connect and share information with members, prospects, and the community at large. Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd promotes activities and accomplishments of the organisation through its official Facebook pages, blogs and other social media. However, it is recognised that unrestrained use of social media and its nature as a virtually permanent public forum can pose issues of privacy, intellectual property, general liability and other legal issues that can harm the organisation and the employees using social media. We expect all employees who participate in social media for work-related and/or personal purposes to understand and follow this policy and maintain proper social conduct whilst using online and social media.

Compliance with Relevant Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd Policies When Participating in Social Media

The same principles and guidelines that apply to Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd employees' activities in general apply to their activities online, both at work and outside of work. This includes all forms of online publishing and discussion, including blogs, wikis, file-sharing, user-generated video and audio, social networks, and other social network applications when employees are discussing Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd -related topics. Violation of the Social Media policy, or any other policy, may subject an employee to discipline up to and including termination of employment.

Participating in Social Media on Behalf of Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd

Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd recognises the opportunity and benefit social media provides to have a real-time conversation with a wide audience of members, prospects and others. Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd does pre-screen employee-posted content and regularly review other posted content on all Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd social media sites and has the right in its sole discretion to remove any content that it considers spam, an invasion of privacy, false, misleading, fraudulent, defamatory, profane, illegal, not in agreement with Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd policies and/or standards, or otherwise found to be objectionable and to violate the terms of this policy. If you are leading, facilitating, writing or administrating an official Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd social media page or blog, please also remember the following:

- Employees must obtain permission from their department head to participate on behalf of the Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd. Any messages that might function as the "voice" or position of the Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd must be approved by Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd senior staff, as appropriate.

- Do not share private or confidential information. The Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd Confidentiality Policy defines confidential information and supplements this policy.
- Never comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation, or any parties we are in litigation with.
- By posting content, you are granting Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd a non-exclusive, royalty-free, perpetual, and worldwide license to use your content in connection with Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd, including, without limitation, the license rights to copy, distribute, transmit, publicly display, publicly perform, reproduce, edit, translate and reformat your content, and/or to incorporate it into a collective work.
- When publicly displaying, performing, reproducing, or distributing copies of your content, or content as incorporated into a collective work, Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd will make best efforts to credit your authorship. You grant Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd permission to use your name for such attribution purposes.
- Unauthorised use of the Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd name to endorse or promote any product, opinion, cause, issue, or political candidates is prohibited.
- Employees should not respond to negative comments or criticism posted about Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd unless permission has already been granted to that employee for responding.
- Ensure photo permission is sought for all posted on social media by both DSTSS & relevant individuals

Personal Use of Social Media

Remember these are public forums and be thoughtful about how you present yourself in online social media. The lines between public and private, personal and professional are blurred in social networks. As a general rule, it is expected that all employees will use common sense and sound judgement when utilising any social media tool. Please take care in commenting on personal issues/religious or political opinions if these can be accessed by the members we are supporting.

Personal use of social media sites (including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, TikTok, Instagram, Zoom and personal blogs) during working hours is prohibited. Use personal e-mail addresses on social networking sites when you are not participating on behalf of Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd. All electronic communications and stored information transmitted, received, or archived in Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd information system are the property of Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd. Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd reserves the right to access and disclose any information or messages in its possession. In your personal use of social media, please also remember:

- Do not use logos, trademarks, or other intellectual property of Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd without written approval from Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd senior staff, as appropriate.
- If you chose to discuss Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd initiatives or programs, disclose your connection to and role within Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd. Use good judgement and strive for accuracy in these communications. Write in the first person and use a disclaimer approved by Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd. The disclaimer should clearly state that the content is the opinion of the author and does not necessarily represent the views of Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd as

appropriate. However, even with a disclaimer, do not share private or confidential information of Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd on a personal page or blog nor ever comment on anything related to legal matters, litigation, or any parties we are in litigation with. The Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd Confidentiality Policy defines confidential information and supplements this policy.

- Do not use social media for internal communication among fellow employees. Social media forums are public and not the place to communicate Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd policies or resolve internal workplace conflicts.
- Be respectful of our members, business partners, vendors, other employees, and stakeholders in our organisations.
- Any information employees obtain in the course of their employment must not be used for personal gain or be passed on to others who may use it in such a way.
- By virtue of their position in the organisation, Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd directors, managers, and supervisors must consider whether personal thoughts they publish might be misunderstood as official Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd positions. Always assume that members of your team will read what is written.

Cameras, Tablets and Mobile Phones

It is essential that photographs/videos are taken and stored appropriately to safeguard the children and vulnerable adults in our care. Parent consent for photos/videos is on our membership and registration forms and is recorded on our family membership database.

- Images taken must be deemed suitable without putting the child/children/vulnerable adults in any compromising positions that could cause embarrassment or distress.
- Staff are not allowed to upload photographs/videos without the permission of the manager.
- Images taken and stored on a phone, iPad or camera must be downloaded as soon as possible, ideally once a week.
- Once used photos/videos must be deleted from the device.

E safety

- E safety refers to the use of mobile phones, games consoles, PC, laptop – any device that can be linked to the internet.
- Social media platforms include- Zoom, Facebook, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, gaming, messaging, YouTube, etc.
- All staff need to understand what acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is for themselves, other staff and the parents and children using our centre.
- Concerns about any abuse or disclosures that take place online must also be reported to the relevant safeguarding officer and dealt with in the same way as face-to-face disclosure as detailed in the Child Protection/Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policy.
- Training for staff managing the online presence should be provided.

Managing our online presence:

- All social media accounts will be password protected and at least 3 members of staff will have access to each account and password – Wendy Uttley, Charlotte Roscoe-Mitchell, Jenn Casper-Smith, Heidi Grosvenor, Karen Barron and Elanor Murray.
- Accounts will be monitored by a designated person (DP) – Wendy Uttley.
- Any inappropriate posts by children, staff or parents will be removed, explaining why and informing anyone affected.
- Facebook groups for children and young people – EDG and WisH Club are set to private so that only invited members can see content.
- The group Facebook group is set to closed – again members need to be approved.
- The Facebook page is public, and this must be monitored carefully by the DP.
- Identifying details such as child's home address, school, telephone number should not be posted on social media sites.

Posts and communications

- Any posts should be consistent with our aim as a charity.
- Parents will be asked to give their approval for us to communicate with their children through social media sites, text or any other e-device
- Staff should communicate any messages they wish to send out to children and young people to the DP before doing so.
- Staff must make sure any content is accurate and appropriate as young people may 'follow' them.
- Staff should not 'friend' or 'follow' children or young people from personal accounts on social media or communicate with them via personal accounts or private messaging.
- Parents will give permission for photographs/videos of their child to be used on social media.
- Rather than communicating with parents via personal social media accounts staff should choose a more formal means to communicate such as face to face, WhatsApp from the work mobile, email or in writing or use our charities account wherever possible. We also recognise the increased use of text messages, Facebook messenger and WhatsApp.
- At least one other member of staff should be copied into any emails, texts or other electronic messages sent direct to children/young people.
- Emails should be signed off in a professional manner – avoid xxx and emojis.
- Staff and young people should not engage in sexting or send pictures/videos to anyone that is obscene, indecent or menacing.

When using a mobile phone:

- Staff will avoid having children's or young people's personal mobile phone numbers and instead contact via parent/carer.
- If direct contact is needed parental permission will be sought
- Staff should have separate phone from their personal one for contact with parents/young people.
- Texts to young people should be used for communicating information – such as reminding about events, and not to engage in conversation.
- Texts should be written in a professional manner – avoid xxx and emojis.
- Texts sent directly to a young person should also be copied into another member of staff.

Date of review: December 2025

Date of next review: December 2026

Child Protection Policy

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Section 2: Our ethos
Section 3: Implementing the policy
Section 4: DBS clearance and safeguard training
Section 5: Safe recruitment
Section 6: Code of conduct for staff, volunteers and directors
Section 7: Recognising safeguarding issues
Section 8: Role of safeguarding officers
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Section 10: Allegations against a member of staff, volunteer or director
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Appendix A: Flow chart of procedure
Appendix B: Form for recording safeguarding concerns
Appendix C: Online application for DBS check
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Appendix E: Form to sign to confirm you have read and understood our safeguarding policies
Appendix F: Reference request form covering safeguarding checks

Section 1 Introduction

The Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd (DST&SS) provides support, information, activities, and training for families caring for children with Down syndrome and the professionals who work with them. At the many events arranged to meet this provision the children are accompanied by their parents and/or family members or by a designated one to one carer. The children range from birth to 18+ years of age. On occasions when training is for practitioners/parents only and parents wish to bring along their children, if we are unable to arrange a creche with suitably qualified workers, we always state that their care and supervision is the responsibility of the parents.

These procedures have been designed to ensure the welfare and protection of any child and/or young person who accesses the services provided by Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd. The procedures recognise that child protection can be a very difficult subject for workers to deal with to the extent that it is sometimes easier to close your eyes to what is happening or believe that it is somebody else's problem to deal with. The Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd is committed to the belief that protecting children and young people is everybody's responsibility and therefore the aim here is to provide guidelines that will enable all workers and volunteers to act appropriately to any concerns that arise in respect of a child/young person.

Section 2 Our ethos

Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people.
DST&SS has a duty to be aware that abuse, neglect and radicalisation does occur in our society. lt recognises its responsibility to take all reasonable steps to promote safe practice and to protect children from harm, abuse and exploitation, prevent the impairment of children's health or development and ensure that children are in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
DST&SS takes action to ensure all children have the best outcomes and ensures staff are aware of the systems in place to safeguard children.

Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd acknowledges its duty to act appropriately to any allegations, reports or suspicions of abuse.

Paid staff, volunteers and directors 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.

Everyone working in our setting recognises their responsibilities towards the children attending our centre. We understand that safeguarding is not just about protecting children from deliberate harm, but it relates to all aspects of care and education relating to children's wellbeing, health and safety.

DST&SS ensure all visitors are recorded, monitored and know how to raise safeguarding concerns if needed. Signposts are located around the centre with the Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Flow Chart. (See appendix A)

Children have the right to be treated with respect and to be safe from any abuse in whatever form.

The DST&SS will work with children, parents, carers, school, external agencies and the community to ensure the welfare and safety of children.

Section 3 Implementing the policy

In implementing this child protection policy Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd will:

- train all staff to understand our safeguarding policy and procedures, and ensure that all staff have up to date knowledge of safeguarding issues.

- ensure that all workers understand their legal and moral responsibility to protect children and young people from harm, abuse and exploitation;

- ensure that all workers understand their duty to report concerns that arise about a child or young person, or a worker's conduct towards a child/young person, to the safeguarding officer, SO, (also known as the child protection officer)

- aim to provide a safe, respectful and supportive environment for children to allow them to feel confident to approach adults and feel secure in the knowledge that they will be listened to.
- ensure that children and young people are enabled to express their ideas and views on a wide range of issues and give feedback on these issues.

- aim to ensure that adults talk and listen to children where they have concerns about their safety and wellbeing.

- 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;

- create an environment to encourage children to develop a positive self-image and self-esteem.

- encourage children to develop a sense of independence and autonomy in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development

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

Section 4 DBS clearance and safeguard training

We aim to provide a secure and safe environment for all children. DST&SS will therefore not allow an adult to be left alone with a child who has not received their DBS clearance.

The Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd will ensure that all staff receive copies of policies and procedures relating to the safety and protection of children and sign to say that they understand their responsibilities under these procedures. See Appendix E.

DBS checks will take place at the start of a workers employment, paid or voluntary, and prior to any contact with children. This can be initiated online, see appendix C. All staff will be encouraged to apply for the DBS update service which must be done once the DBS is received.

DBS checks will be renewed every three years for voluntary staff, directors and Speech and Language Therapists. Paid members of staff will be registered with the update service when their DBS check is renewed. All staff now need to transfer to the update service, and this will be done when their current DBS is renewed.

If any issues or queries are raised DST&SS have the right to request a new DBS check at any time on any member of staff, volunteer or director.

All staff, volunteers, Directors and therapists are responsible for notifying the SO in person should any circumstances arise, that may affect their suitability to work with children/young people or carry out their role within the charity. This will include any incidents occurring outside the setting. Staff will face disciplinary action should they fail to notify the manager in a reasonable timescale.

Down syndrome training and Support service abides by the employer's responsibilities relating to informing the Independent Safeguarding Authority of any changes to the suitability of their staff, whether this member of staff has left the setting or is still under investigation.

Training

The Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd will ensure that all staff members whether paid or unpaid, undertake training to gain a basic awareness of the signs and symptoms of child abuse

At induction all staff/volunteers will receive Basic Level 1 training via the Safeguarding everyone eLearning site. See Appendix D. Refresher training will be every 2 years. Frontline staff will receive level 2 safeguarding training and will take an annual level 2 refresher course. The Safeguarding Officer will receive external level 3 safeguarding training every 2 years and undertake an additional training required.

Annual in-house training, monthly staff meetings and annual appraisals will be used to update the staff team's knowledge and understanding of safeguarding issues.

The SO will be responsible for any support the staff/volunteer team may have between these reviews. This includes mentor support, one-to-one training sessions, on-going supervision, work-based observations and constructive feedback.

Should staff have to deal with any possible abuse or neglect issues they will receive emotional support from the management team or external agencies if required.

Section 5 Safe recruitment

The Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd is striving to be an equal opportunity employer and abides by the Equality Act 2010. Therefore, we will aim to treat all workers and job applicants equally. There will be no discrimination in respect of marital status, gender, sexuality, disability, age, colour, race, religion or belief (or lack of belief), nationality, ethnic or national origins. There will be no discrimination on these grounds in the terms and conditions offered to workers or job applicants.

DST&SS have a Public Sector Duty to consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work – in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees. DST&SS has a responsibility to eliminate discrimination, advance equality or opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying our activities.

Preventing unsuitable people from working with children

DST&SS has a duty to ensure that people looking after children are suitable to fulfil the requirements for their role. We will follow Safer Recruitment practices including verifying qualifications and ensuring appropriate DBS and reference checks are undertaken. We will not allow people whose suitability has not been checked, to have unsupervised contact with children. We will:

- Prepare clear job descriptions; person specifications; develop standardised questions for interview purposes.

- All publicity/the application form will clearly state that the position will involve working with children and will require an enhanced DBS Disclosure. A self declaration will also be used for screening applicants prior to the interview stage.

- Check full employment histories which should cover *at least* the previous 5 years. Any gaps in employment should be explained.

- Check Identities and Qualifications. At least 2 forms of identification provided at interview and certificates relating to qualifications. This could also be supplemented with a check to the awarding body if any doubts exist.

- Obtain references. The referee should be informed the person has applied for a post that involves contact with children/young people. They should be asked to comment on the candidate's **suitability** to work with children and an opinion on their suitability within this role. The referee must be informed they may be contacted for further information. See appendix F.

- Inform successful candidates that the appointment will be subject to satisfactory references and a clear enhanced DBS check.

Staff are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children (whether received before or during their employment at the setting).

DST&SS will abide by the Human Rights Act 1998. DST&SS will let you defend your rights in UK courts and treat you equally with fairness, dignity and respect.

DST&SS will ensure that any disciplinary proceedings against staff relating to child protection matters are concluded in full even when the member of staff is no longer employed at the setting and that notification of any concerns is made to the relevant agencies, the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and included in references where applicable.

DST&SS will ensure that all new employees and volunteers will be checked against the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to eliminate any potential risk. The check includes a police database check. (See appendix C)

Section 6 Code of conduct for staff, volunteers and Directors

The DST&SS will ensure that the code of conduct for workers training with young people is followed at all times.

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

- Exercise caution about being alone with a child. In situations where this is unavoidable, ensure another worker or volunteer knows what you are doing and where you are. Where appropriate, ensure a door remains open to the room in which you are alone with a child.
- Ensure that any physical contact is open and initiated by the child's needs, e.g., for a hug when upset or help with toileting. Always prompt children to carry out personal care themselves and if they cannot manage ask if they would like help.
- Where possible encourage parents to take responsibility for their own children
- all activity, as far as possible, is publicly observed or conducted in a group setting;
- inappropriate touching of any form is never permitted; See touch policy.
- the use of inappropriate language never goes unchallenged;
- Be clear with anyone disclosing any matter that could concern the safety and wellbeing of a child that you cannot guarantee to keep this information to yourself
- You should not be under the influence of alcohol or any other substance which may affect your ability to care for children.
- Seek opportunities for training
- appropriate action will be taken in all cases and instances of child protection concerns involving young people;
- a '**whistleblowing' policy** will be adhered to. This will ensure that staff who make bona fide complaints about colleagues' behaviour will not be punished, even if the concerns prove unfounded.

In addition to this the DST&SS has a **Complaints and Compliments Policy** that covers situations of inappropriate conduct by staff and the mechanisms for complaining about this.

Section 7 Recognising safeguarding issues

Definition of Abuse

The Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd recognises that it has a duty to act on reports or suspicions of abuse. It also acknowledges that acting in cases of child abuse is never easy. However, we believe that the safety of the child should override any doubts or hesitations.

Abuse refers to:

27. Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

28. Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what 9 they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the child from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, although it may occur alone.

29. Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children is a specific safeguarding issue in education and all staff should be aware of it and of their school or college's policy and procedures for dealing with it.

30. Neglect: the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development

All adults have the right to be safe from harm and should be able to live free from fear of abuse, neglect and exploitation. (See Vulnerable Adults Policy)

All staff need to familiarise themselves with these definitions.

All staff are encouraged to report any form of abuse. Staff are not alone and must not keep abuse to themselves.

It is not the responsibility of the staff to investigate welfare concerns or determine the truth of any disclosure or allegation. All staff however have a duty to recognise concerns and maintain an open mind. All concerns regarding the welfare of children must be recorded and discussed with the SO and prior to any discussion with parents/carers. The SO will monitor vulnerable children and any changes or concerns will be reported.

The Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd has an **Incident Book** where the SO, will record any reported incidents or breach of Child Protection policies and procedures. This will be kept in a secure place and its contents will be confidential.

Section 8 Role of safeguarding officers

Laura Hempel, Wendy Uttley and Jenny Rowlands, DST&SS are the nominated Safeguarding Officers, with Laura Hempel the lead officer. Her responsibility it is to ensure that all necessary measures are in place to safeguard children. In her absence, a deputy will always be available for workers to consult with. The named persons for Child Protection within the Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd are:

Lead contact person:	Laura Hempel
Work telephone number:	01274 561308
Mobile number:	07849 347041
Emergency contact no:	07849 347041
Name of contact person:	Wendy Uttley
Work telephone number:	01274 561308
Mobile number:	07816 465845
Name of contact person:	Jenny Rowlands
Mobile number:	07850 654667
Emergency contact no:	01423 610255 (home)

The Safeguarding Officer should inform the Safeguarding Board of any allegation of serious harm against, or abuse of a child reported by any person looking after them at the centre, (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed at the centre or elsewhere), and the action taken in respect of these allegations need also to be reported and if necessary; any other significant event that is likely to affect the suitability to look after children at our centre.

Notification must be made as soon as is reasonably practicable, but always within 14 days. A safeguarding officer, without reasonable excuse, failing to comply with these requirements is committing an offence.

Responsibilities of the SO

It is the overall responsibility of the SO to ensure that all necessary measures are in place to safeguard

children and that all staff adhere to the policy and procedures. The Safeguarding Officer's responsibilities are as follows: -

- To have completed the required BSCB (Bradford Safeguarding Children's Board) training in safeguarding and to keep this up to date with all current training.
- To ensure that there is a suitable policy in place which is updated and reviewed annually and with current BSCB guidance.
- To follow and carry out all BSCB procedures.
- To ensure staff are fully trained and equipped to fulfil their role with regards to safeguarding children and that they have a refresher training annually
- To ensure that safer recruitment procedures are followed when recruiting and monitoring ongoing staff suitability.
- To deal with all allegations against staff or persons working within the setting.
- Liaising with other agencies and services where appropriate
- To seek advice and support for staff from relevant agencies where appropriate.
- To talk to parents about concerns (where appropriate)
- Keeping up-to-date records and to ensure they are stored securely.
- To refer a child to Children's and Families Services if there are any concerns about suspected abuse or neglect by telephone and followed up in writing. (This is to be followed up in writing to services, in our own records or both)
- To attend multi-agency strategy meetings, child protection meetings, contribute to a children in need or child protection plan and attend case conferences when necessary.

Any child protection concerns should only be shared with staff on a 'need to know' basis. Consideration should be taken as to which staff this concerns and how much information needs to be shared. This is usually information that staff will require to ensure the safety and welfare of the child.

Section 9 What to do if you are worried about a child

The Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd recognises that it has a duty to act on reports or suspicions of abuse. It also acknowledges that taking action in cases of child abuse is never easy. However, the Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd believes that the safety of the child should override any doubts or hesitations. When worrying changes are observed in a child's or young person's behaviour, physical condition or appearance staff will:

Stage 1

- Initially talk to a child/young 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 young person has to say and take it seriously;

- Never investigate or take sole responsibility for a situation where a child/young person makes a disclosure;
- Always explain to children and young people that any information they have given will have to be shared with others;
- 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. See appendix B
- Respect confidentiality and file documents securely;
- Notify and pass on the concern to the organisation's Named Person for Child Protection –SO.

Stage 2

- The SO will take immediate action if there is a suspicion that a child has been abused or likely to be abused. In this situation the SO will contact the police and/or Children's Social Care. If a referral is made direct to Children's Social Care this must be followed up in writing as soon as possible.
- The SO 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 A

Section 10 Allegations against a member of staff, volunteer or director

It is the duty of all staff to report to the SO anyone working at the setting who is:

- Not following setting policies and procedures.
- Displaying inappropriate conduct e.g., inappropriate sexual comments and behaviours, sharing or discussing sexual photos or images
- Giving excessive 1:1 attention beyond the requirements of their usual role and responsibility
- Taking and/or sharing child abuse images
- Any concerns of radicalisation shown in a change of behaviour

The Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd will ensure that any allegations made against members, or a member of staff will be dealt with swiftly and in accordance with these procedures:

- The worker must ensure that the child is safe and away from the person whom the allegation is made
- The SO should be informed immediately. In the case of an allegation involving the SO, alternative arrangements should be sought to ensure that the matter is dealt with by an independent person. (Note: this could be a director or anyone within the organisation that is in a senior position and believed to be independent of the allegations being made)
- The SO should contact the local area children's 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 worker during this process but must not complete the report for the worker. 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, Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd 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 dependent on the nature of the incident.
- The member of staff will remain employed on full pay and benefits but on 'Garden Leave' until a full investigation has been carried out, and a decision has been made as to whether the complaint or allegation was justified or not. If the member of staff is not deemed to pose a risk to children, staff or parents/carers then they will remain on the premises and continue to work whilst the complaint/allegation is investigated.
- **Staff must not make any comments either publicly or in private about a parent's or staff's supposed or actual behaviour**.

Section 11 Useful contacts

Useful Contacts/Support Organisations

- During office hours (8.30 - 4.00 Monday to Thursday, 12.30 on Friday) call Children's Services Contact Centre - 01274 435600 to refer any child in need, including child protection concerns.
- At all other times, Social Services Emergency Duty Team - 01274 431010
- If you have reason to believe that a child is at immediate risk of harm, contact the police on 999
- Specific advice about issues concerning South Asian children can be sought on the NSPCC National Child Protection Asian Helpline on 0800 096 7719.

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline

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

Other areas Social Services:

- Leeds Referral hotline 0113 376 0336 or outside office hours 0113 5350600 Children's Emergency Duty Team
- Wakefield Child Protection Unit, Social Care Direct 03458503503
- Kirklees Gateway to care 01484 414933 (outside office hours)
- Calderdale Initial Response Team 01422 393336

Section 12 – Reviewing Policies and Procedures

This policy is to be reviewed annually in February of each year.

Any changes/amendments will be clarified and shared with staff and where significant changes appear they will be relayed to parents/carers.

Relevant Legislation
Human Rights Act 1998
Equality Act 2010
Public Sector Duty
Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015

Related Policies

Vulnerable Adults Policy
Touch Policy
E-Safety and social media Policy
Recruitment Policy and Procedures
Disciplinary Rules & Procedures Policy

Dated……Signed……

Updated: February 2025
Next Update: February 2026

Appendix A Flow chart of procedure

Child Protection & Vulnerable Adult Procedures Flow Chart

On discovery or suspicion of child abuse
If in doubt – ACT

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Inform your Named Person for Child Protection

Laura Hempel



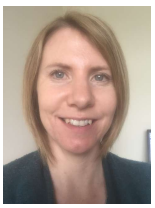
07426 540271

Wendy Uttley



07816 465845

Jenny Rowlands



07850 654667

Who should then take the following steps

One of the named persons will take a written record of concerns from you (or you can write your own record and pass it to them) This will be kept confidential in a locked file.

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Where it is clear that a Child Protection Referral is needed, they will contact Children's Initial Contact Point without delay **Tel No 01274 435600**
Children with complex needs **Tel No 01274 435751**
Out of hrs Emergency Duty Team **Tel No 01274 431010**
Named Persons may also seek advice from the Children's Specialist Services
Tel 01274 435600

IF THERE IS AN IMMEDIATE RISK OF HARM CALL 999

↓

If you are asked to monitor the situation, make sure you are clear what you are expected to monitor, for how long and how and to whom you should feedback information to.

↓

Remember always make and keep a written record of all events and action taken, date and sign each entry to this record. Keep records confidential and secure.
Ensure immediate completion and dispatch of the Common Child Protection Referral form.
Send copies to:

- Children's Social Care
- Principal Education Social Worker Future House, Bolling Road, Bradford BD4 7EB

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Children's Social Care Initial Contact Point: 01274 435600
Emergency Duty Team: 01274 431010
Childrens Specialist Service: 01274 435600 Police**:** Bradford Safeguarding Unit: 01274 431077

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

Introduction

Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, engaged in the breadth of its activities.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the duty and responsibility of staff, volunteers and trustees working on behalf of *Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd* in relation to the protection of vulnerable adults from abuse.

This policy should be read AFTER reading our Child Protection Policy.

All adults have the right to be safe from harm and should be able to live free from fear of abuse, neglect and exploitation.

The key objectives of this policy are:

- To explain the responsibilities ***Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd*** and its staff, volunteers and trustees have in respect of vulnerable adult protection.
- To provide staff with an overview of vulnerable adult protection.
- To provide a clear procedure that will be implemented where vulnerable adult protection issues arise.

Context
For the purpose of this document 'adult' means a person aged 18 years or over.

Some adults are less able to protect themselves than others, and some have difficulty making their wishes and feelings known. This may make them vulnerable to abuse. The broad definition of a 'vulnerable adult' referred to in the 1997 Consultation Paper 'Who decides?' issued by the Lord Chancellor's Department, is a person:

"Who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation".

The first priority should always be to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable adults. To this end it is the responsibility of all staff to act on any suspicion or evidence of abuse or neglect (see the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998) and to pass on their concerns to a responsible person/agency.

For purposes of ensuring consistent and widely understood terminology, these policy and procedures will use the phrase 'Vulnerable Adults' to identify those eligible for interventions within the procedures.

Legal framework
This guidance reflects the principles contained within the Human Rights Act 1998, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998.

The Mental Capacity Act 2005, covering England and Wales, provides a statutory framework for people who lack capacity to make decisions for themselves, or who have capacity and want to make preparations for a time when they may lack capacity in the future. It sets out who can take decisions, in which situations, and how they should go about this.

The Human Rights Act 1998 gives legal effect in the UK to the fundamental rights and freedoms contained in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) created a framework for whistle blowing

across the private, public and voluntary sectors. The Act provides almost every individual in the workplace with protection from victimisation where they raise genuine concerns about malpractice in accordance with the Act's provisions.

The role of staff, volunteers and trustees
All staff, volunteers and trustees working on behalf of *Down Syndrome Training & Support Service Ltd* have a duty to promote the welfare and safety of vulnerable adults.

Staff, volunteers and trustees may receive disclosures of abuse and observe vulnerable adults who are at risk. This policy will enable staff/volunteers to make informed and confident responses to specific adult protection issues.

Code of conduct for staff, volunteers and Directors

The DSTSS will ensure that the code of conduct for workers with young people is followed at all times.

The code is designed to minimise situations where abuse may occur by stipulating, in addition to the Child Protection Policy Section 6, that:

- Ensuring any relationship between two vulnerable adults is a safe and healthy relationship and that it is understood that permission for any intimacies has full consent from both adults and that they understand what this means.
- Members of staff ensure that touch is appropriate at ALL times and are able to explain any issues involving touch. See touch policy for more details.
- Members of staff ensure their relationship with a vulnerable adult is appropriate at ALL times. Suspected 'crushes', need to be discouraged.
- Members of staff need to take care not to get over involved in the personal life of a vulnerable adult in a way that leaves the vulnerable adult in need of/seeking their support. If a member of staff is worried about this, they must speak to the SO and seek advice.
- Relationships with vulnerable adults must remain professional.

In addition to this the DSTSS has a **Complaints and Compliments Policy** that covers situations of inappropriate conduct by staff and the mechanisms for complaining about this.

What is abuse?
Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons.

Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship, and it may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it.

The Office of the Public Guardian's Safeguarding Policy 2023 defines abuse as the following:

Physical

This includes assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, giving the wrong (or no) medication, restraining someone or only letting them do certain things at certain times.

Domestic

This includes psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional abuse. It also covers so-called 'honour' based violence.

Sexual

This includes rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, taking sexual photographs, making someone look at pornography or watch sexual acts, sexual assault or sexual acts the adult didn't consent to or was pressured into consenting.

Psychological

This includes emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, depriving someone of contact with someone else, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, putting pressure on someone to do something, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or support networks.

Financial or material

This includes theft, fraud, internet scamming, putting pressure on someone about their financial arrangements (including wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions) or the misuse or stealing of property, possessions or benefits.

Modern slavery

This covers slavery (including domestic slavery), human trafficking and forced labour. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever they can to pressurise, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse and inhumane treatment.

Discriminatory

This includes types of harassment or insults because of someone's race, gender or gender identity, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion.

Organisational

This includes neglect and poor care in an institution or care setting such as a hospital or care home, or if an organisation provides care in someone's home. The abuse can be a one-off incident or repeated, on-going ill treatment. The abuse can be through neglect or poor professional practice, which might be because of structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Neglect and acts of omission

This includes ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to educational services, or not giving someone what they need to help them live, such as medication, enough nutrition and heating.

Self-neglect

This covers a wide range of behaviour which shows that someone isn't caring for their own personal hygiene, health or surroundings. It includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Procedure in the event of a disclosure

It is important that vulnerable adults are protected from abuse. All complaints, allegations or suspicions must be taken seriously.

This procedure must be followed whenever an allegation of abuse is made or when there is a suspicion that a vulnerable adult has been abused.

Promises of confidentiality should not be given as this may conflict with the need to ensure the safety and welfare of the individual.

A full record shall be made as soon as possible of the nature of the allegation and any other relevant information.

This should include information in relation to the date, the time, the place where the alleged abuse happened, your name and the names of others present, the name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the adult who has allegedly been abused, the nature of the alleged abuse, a description of any injuries observed, the account which has been given of the allegation.

Responding to an allegation

Any suspicion, allegation or incident of abuse must be reported to a member of staff or volunteer as appropriate.

The nominated member of staff/ volunteer shall telephone and report the matter to the appropriate local adult social services duty social worker. A written record of the date and time of the report shall be made, and the report must include the name and position of the person to whom the matter is reported. The telephone report must be confirmed in writing to the relevant local authority adult social services department within 24 hours.

Safeguarding officers

Lead contact person:	Laura Hempel
Work telephone number:	01274 561308
Mobile number:	**07849 347041**
Emergency contact no:	**07849 347041**
Name of contact person:	Wendy Uttley
Work telephone number:	01274 561308
Mobile number:	**07816465845**
Name of contact person:	Jenny Rowlands
Mobile number:	**07850654667**
Emergency contact no:	**01423 610255 (home)**

Responding appropriately to an allegation of abuse – see also flow chart in appendix A
In the event of an incident or disclosure:

DO

- Make sure the individual is safe
- Assess whether emergency services are required and if needed call them
- Listen
- Offer support and reassurance
- Ascertain and establish the basic facts
- Make careful notes and obtain agreement on them
- Ensure notation of dates, time and persons present are correct and agreed
- Take all necessary precautions to preserve forensic evidence
- Follow correct procedure
- Explain areas of confidentiality; immediately speak to your manager for support and guidance
- Explain the procedure to the individual making the allegation
- Remember the need for ongoing support.

DON'T

- Confront the alleged abuser
- Be judgmental or voice your own opinion
- Be dismissive of the concern
- Investigate or interview beyond that which is necessary to establish the basic facts
- Disturb or destroy possible forensic evidence
- Consult with persons not directly involved with the situation
- Ask leading questions
- Assume Information
- Make promises
- Ignore the allegation

- Elaborate in your notes
- Panic

It is important to remember that the person who first encounters a case of alleged abuse is not responsible for deciding whether abuse has occurred. This is a task for the professional adult protection agencies, following a referral from the designated Vulnerable Adult Protection Officer.

Confidentiality

Vulnerable adult protection raises issues of confidentiality which should be clearly understood by all.

Staff, volunteers and trustees have a professional responsibility to share relevant information about the protection of vulnerable adults with other professionals, particularly investigative agencies and adult social services.

Clear boundaries of confidentiality will be communicated to all.

All personal information regarding a vulnerable adult will be kept confidential. All written records will be kept in a secure area for a specific time as identified in data protection guidelines. Records will only record details required in the initial contact form.

If an adult confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, it is important that the member of staff tells the adult sensitively that he or she has a responsibility to refer cases of alleged abuse to the appropriate agencies.

Within that context, the adult should, however, be assured that the matter will be disclosed only to people who need to know about it.

Where possible, consent should be obtained from the adult before sharing personal information with third parties. In some circumstances obtaining consent may be neither possible nor desirable as the safety and welfare of the vulnerable adult is the priority.

Where a disclosure has been made, staff should let the adult know the position regarding their role and what action they will have to take as a result.

Staff should assure the adult that they will keep them informed of any action to be taken and why. The adults' involvement in the process of sharing information should be fully considered and their wishes and feelings taken into account.

The role of key individual agencies

Adult Social Services

The Department of Health's recent 'No secrets' guidance document requires that authorities develop a local framework within which all responsible agencies work together to ensure a coherent policy for the protection of vulnerable adults at risk of abuse.

All local authorities have a Safeguarding Adults Board, which oversees multi-agency work aimed at protecting and safeguarding vulnerable adults. It is normal practice for the board to comprise of people from partner organisations who have the ability to influence decision making and resource allocation within their organisation.

The Police

The Police play a vital role in Safeguarding Adults with cases involving alleged criminal acts. It becomes the responsibility of the police to investigate allegations of crime by preserving and gathering evidence. Where a crime is identified, the police will be the lead agency and they will direct investigations in line with legal and other procedural protocols.

1. www.bradford.gov.uk/makeanalert referrals should be made online or can be made via phone if necessary, by contacting 01274 431077

Adopted 9th December 2009

Date of last Review: February 2025

Date of Next Review: February 2026

APPENDIX Afile:///C:/Users/Wendy/Documents/quick-guide-to-safeguarding-adults-procedures-for-staff-and-volunteers-new.pdf

Quick Guide to Safeguarding Adults Procedures for staff and volunteers

What to do if an adult is at risk

If you are informed or become aware of possible abuse or neglect:

- Take action to ensure the immediate safety and welfare of the adult (and any other person at risk)
- If urgent attention is needed for health or safety dial 999
- If a crime needs to be reported call the police on 101
- Preserve any evidence
- Accurately record the incident, any action or decisions. Make sure you sign it and add the date and time
- Follow the prompts on the rest of this guide.

How to respond

- If possible, **speak** to the adult at risk without putting them or yourself at further risk
- Reassure them that what they say will be taken seriously
- Use open ended questions e.g. '**T**ell me / **E**xplain/ **D**escribe what has happened' (remember '**TED**')
- Do not probe: this is a preliminary conversation only about the safeguarding issues and the adult's views and wishes
- If possible, **support** the person to make immediate decisions, including whether they want a Safeguarding Concern to be raised
- Look out for any signs that the person may lack mental capacity to make decisions about their own safety
- Explain to the adult what you will do next
- Consult with your line manager for advice and support.

Views and wishes of the Adult at Risk

Always **consider** the adult's views and wishes and **act** upon them, if possible. However, the adult's wishes may be overridden in some circumstances for example:

- In the public interest e.g. if there is a risk to others, a member of staff or volunteer is involved or it relates to a care setting
- In the person's vital interests – to prevent serious harm or distress or in life threatening situations
- If the person is subject to coercion or undue influence to the extent that they are unable to give consent
- If the person lacks mental capacity and it is in their best interests.

How to raise a Safeguarding Concern

Talk to your line manager, Safeguarding Concerns Manager, Safeguarding Adults Lead or contact the Adult Protection Unit.

Report adult abuse online at:
www.bradford.gov.uk/makeanalert
If you have difficulty completing the online form call the Adult Protection Unit on **01274 431077.**

The full version of the West Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures is available on **www.bradford.gov.uk/apunit**

The wording in this publication can be made available in other formats such as large print and Braille. Please call 01274 431077

Appendix B

Responsibilities of Individuals

Raising a Concern

Note: any actions needed to ensure the immediate safety of the adult at risk should be taken at this point.

Anyone can raise a Safeguarding Concern with the local authority. The agreement of the adult at risk should be sought if possible. The adult's wishes may be overridden in some circumstances (see the box 'Views and wishes of the Adult at Risk').

Staff Members receiving a disclosure or noticing abuse themselves should follow their organisation's policy and contact the manager who acts as **Safeguarding Concerns Manager** for advice and support on raising a Concern.

A Safeguarding Concern is raised via an online form and is then viewed by the Adult Protection Unit.

Target Timescales for raising a Concern:
Immediately where urgent and serious or within same working day.

Initial Enquiry

Adult Protection Unit ensures that initial enquiries are made to identify what further action may be needed.

Target Timescales:
At the earliest opportunity.

Response A
Issues resolved by initial enquiries or adult has declined further action.

Response B
No further enquiries needed into abuse but actions needed to safeguard the adult/others. This can be a Risk Management Response e.g. care planning, best interests.

Response C
A formal enquiry is needed to establish the facts and how to safeguard the adult (or others). Concern will be taken through safeguarding procedures.

Strategy Discussion/Meeting

Safeguarding Coordinator will hold a discussion or meeting to plan the Formal Enquiry and ensure that the adult is safeguarded in the intervening period.

Target Timescales: Within five working days of the Initial Enquiry being completed.

Formal Enquiry

Safeguarding Enquiry Officer undertakes Formal Enquiry and produces a report.

Target Timescales: Formal Enquiry report submitted to Safeguarding Coordinator within 7 weeks of Strategy Discussion/Meeting.

Case Conference

Safeguarding Coordinator decides if a Case Conference is needed to discuss the findings of the Formal Enquiry, agree a safeguarding plan and review arrangements.

Target Timescales:
The Case Conference should be held within 8 weeks of the Strategy Discussion/Meeting.

Review

Safeguarding Coordinator holds a review to check the safeguarding plan is working effectively.

Target Timescales: Within 3 months of Case Conference or as agreed.

Throughout this process:

- **The views and desired outcomes of the adult at risk or their representative/advocate must be listened to and recorded**
- **Key people including the adult at risk and relevant parties should be involved or informed of progress**
- **Accessible information formats and communication support should always be offered where required.**

KEY WORDS

Adult at Risk – an adult who has care and support needs, and who because of these needs is unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect.

Safeguarding Concerns Manager – most organisations identify a Safeguarding Concerns Manager to whom any member of staff (or volunteer) should report safeguarding issues and obtain support/guidance.

Safeguarding Coordinator – professionals within Adult Social Care or NHS organisations that have overall responsibility for managing the safeguarding process.

Safeguarding Enquiry Officer – is a member of staff identified to carry out Formal Enquiries. It can be a worker from Adult Social Care, a service provider in regulated settings, including hospitals and other NHS providers.

SAFEGUARDING ADULTS
BRADFORD

Remember!
If you tell someone and they do nothing, tell someone else!
Anyone can raise a concern at: **www.bradford.gov.uk/makeanalert**

November 2015

Appendix C

TayeTraining
The seven golden rules for information sharing

1. **Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information** but provides a framework to endure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.

2. **Be open and honest** with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will (or could be) shared and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.

3. **Seek advice** if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person, where possible.

4. **Share with consent where appropriate** and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.

5. **Consider safety and well-being.**

6. Base your information sharing decisions on consideration of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.

7. **Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure**
   Ensure that the information you share is:

   - Necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it.
   - Shared only with those people who need to have it.
   - Accurate and up to date
   - Shared in a timely fashion and
   - Shared securely.

8. **Keep a record** of your decision and the reasons for it - whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

From Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers
(DCSF October 2008)

Touch Policy

Rationale

There may be understandable fears and concerns voiced by staff and volunteers about the appropriateness and use of touch during the provision of our WisH club. This policy intends to clarify the conditions and reasons for touch of young people at the WiSH club, and to give guidance and support for the safeguarding of young people, staff and volunteers.

The Down syndrome training and support service ltd recognises that touch is essential in the provision of good quality and sensitive care when supporting our members. Used appropriately and with empathy, touch is the corner stone of the natural interactions between staff, volunteers and the young people we care for.

Aims

To outline the importance of touch

To outline the importance of touch in the WisH club sessions

To identify the reasons for touch during the WisH club sessions

Purposes

Touch is important in our daily lives. Physical touch is a form of non-verbal communication. If we deny our members access to touch, we leave them emotionally isolated and lacking in development. Touch may be used routinely with some members in a number of ways:

Communication

Touch is an important way of communication for young people with communication and interaction problems. Communication can be promoted and reinforced by touch. It can also function as the main form of communication in itself.

e.g., in the form of handshake or Hi 5.

Education

Appropriate touch may be necessary for support and guidance during the transition between different activities, e.g., guiding onto fire escape, encouraging to move on to play a different game. This may be a touch on the arm to encourage and help movement.

Play

Young people with delayed development need to play. This may be quite physical and tactile. Social interaction between young people, and between young people and staff /volunteers may involve physical contact in informal situations.

Emotional reasons

Touch is used to communicate warmth and affection, to give reassurance and to communicate security and comfort.

Supportive and caring touch is recognised as being beneficial in lowering blood pressure and stress hormones in young people who are anxious or distressed.

It can also enable the recipient to develop positive emotions and in turn have the ability to communicate them.

Some young people may respond positively or negatively to physical contact. Staff and volunteers need to recognise the individual needs of the young person and respond appropriately by giving personal space or touch.

Medical/Nursing Care and Physical Support

Young people may need to receive passive touch in order to maintain dignity with regards to their physical appearance or their clothing which may require attention from time to time. Touch is necessary in order to carry out personal care and hygiene. If any member of the WisH club needs personal care, they should have a care plan in place. See appendix A, B and C.

In order to maintain the person's privacy, the majority of these actions will take place on a one-to-one basis. Where possible one young person will be catered for by one adult unless there is a sound reason for having more adults present. In this case, the reasons should be clearly documented and reassessed regularly.

Two members of staff must only be used where there is a clear need e.g.:

- A moving and handling need
- A history of child protection issues
- Behavioural issues

We wish to ensure the safety and welfare of the child/vulnerable adult involved in intimate care routines and safeguard against any potential harm, as well as ensuring the staff member involved is fully supported and able to perform their duties safely and confidently. Through the following actions we will endeavour to support all parties:

- Ensure all new staff are fully aware of intimate care routines at induction
- Follow up on these procedures through supervision, meetings and appraisals to identify any areas for development or further training

- Train all staff in the appropriate methods for intimate care routines and access specialist training where required, i.e., first aid training, specialist medical support
- Arrangements for intimate care must be open, transparent and recorded, with the information of where, by who and time taken. Appendix C
- Working closely with parents/carers on all aspects of the person's care plan to ensure needs are met and opportunities to move towards independence are included.

When helping the young adults with changing or more intimate care the member of staff will always ensure they have informed their colleague and record the action in the persons personal hygiene book. See appendix C. If possible, the person should be encouraged to perform the task themselves in order to promote their independence

Guidelines

It is important that all staff and volunteers are clear and open as to the reasons for using touch.

The use of touch should be routinely and openly discussed in meetings.

Staff and volunteers working with WisH club members should be able to explain their practice; i.e., there must be clarity and transparency in all issues of touch. A description should be documented in their Care Plan after consultation with parents and, if needed, other professional agencies. Appendix A.

It is recognised that the emotional, developmental and communication needs of some people take precedence over actual chronological age. Therefore, staff and volunteers concerned with age appropriateness should consider that people of any age may need touch and physical support and the purposes of touch (as previously outlined) are of major importance for some of the WisH clubs members.

Each young person is an individual and consideration should be given to cultural, ethnic and gender issues in the use of touch.

Some young people may not want to be touched. Staff and volunteers should be sensitive to any communication (verbal or non-verbal). The young people may indicate that touch is not welcome. Touch should provide a positive experience.

It should also be provided with the consent of the recipient.

Over-stimulation or negative reactions may be the result of touch. In these circumstances the staff and volunteers should reduce/withdraw touch.

WisH club members are given opportunities to touch each other while interacting and playing. Attention should be given to ensure that both parties are comfortable in these situations. Any inappropriate touch should be used as an opportunity to teach and reinforce appropriate behaviour.

It is NEVER appropriate for staff or volunteers to touch a young person's intimate body areas except as part of medical/hygiene care and only after permission has been sought and received.

Staff and volunteers should feel confident and comfortable around questioning each other's behaviour and all should be aware of child protection protocol. If staff or volunteers have any doubts about the appropriateness of touch in any situation, it is important that these doubts should be raised and discussed with one of the Safeguarding Officers at the Down syndrome training and support service ltd as soon as possible.

Laura Hempel 07849 347041

Wendy Uttley 07816 465845

Jenny Rowlands 07850 654667

We recognise that our young people can be open to abuse. The best method of prevention is teamwork and a transparency in all activities. Staff and volunteers should try to support, monitor and assist each other during the times when touch is needed.

Policy updated: February 2025

Next update: February 2026

CONFIRMATION OF READING POLICIES

NAME……

CONFIRMATION OF READING AND UNDERSTANDING RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER OUR SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURES

I have a completed the Safeguarding online training and applied for my DBS

Signed……date……

I have read the code of conduct, confidentiality policy, social media and e-safety policy and understand my responsibilities and what action I need to take under these procedures.

Signed……date……

I have read the child protection policy and understand my responsibilities and what action I need to take under these procedures.

Signed……date……

I have read the vulnerable adult's policy and understand my responsibilities and what action I need to take under these procedures.

Signed……date……

I have read the touch policy and understand my responsibilities and what action I need to take under these procedures (WisH club only)

Signed……date……

I have a completed the Introduction to Down syndrome training.

Signed……date……

TO BE RETURNED TO DOWN SYNDROME TRAINING & SUPPORT SERVICES