



TalkFIRST SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK POLICY

Version: August 2026

Policy Owner: Tracy Sheppard, Project Manager and Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Review Date: August 2027

1. PURPOSE

TalkFIRST is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk who access our services. We believe that everyone has the right to live free from abuse, neglect, exploitation and harm and that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

This policy sets out the organisation's commitment to:

- Protecting children, young people and adults at risk from harm.
 - Providing a safe environment for service users, staff, trustees and volunteers.
 - Ensuring concerns are identified, reported and acted upon promptly.
 - Supporting a culture of openness, accountability and professional curiosity.
 - Meeting all legal and regulatory safeguarding requirements.
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2. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

This policy is informed by and should be read alongside:

Children

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (current statutory guidance)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (where applicable)
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR
- Online Safety Act 2023

These establish the duty of organisations to safeguard and promote children's welfare and work cooperatively with safeguarding partners to protect children from harm. [[leap.hilli...don.gov.uk](#)], [[Account St...30-04-2026 | PDF](#)], [[viewonline.lgfl.net](#)]

Adults at Risk

- Care Act 2014
- Care and Support Statutory Guidance
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR

TalkFIRST adopts the six safeguarding principles established by the Care Act 2014:

1. Empowerment
2. Prevention
3. Proportionality
4. Protection
5. Partnership
6. Accountability

[[gov.uk](#)], [[scie.org.uk](#)], [[lgfl.net](#)]

3. DEFINITIONS

Children

For the purposes of this policy, a child is any person under the age of 18 years. [\[Account St...30-04-2026 | PDF\]](#), [\[CodeInterpreter | Undefined\]](#)

Adults at Risk

An adult at risk is a person aged 18 or over who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not those needs are being met);
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- As a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from abuse or neglect.

[\[scie.org.uk\]](#), [\[gov.uk\]](#)

4. POLICY STATEMENT

TalkFIRST recognises that safeguarding is fundamental to all aspects of our work.

We will:

- Promote the welfare, health and wellbeing of children and adults at risk.
- Maintain effective safeguarding procedures.
- Recruit staff, trustees and volunteers safely.
- Undertake Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks where appropriate.
- Ensure staff and volunteers receive safeguarding training.
- Maintain clear reporting procedures.
- Work collaboratively with safeguarding agencies and statutory partners.
- Ensure concerns are responded to promptly and proportionately.
- Keep accurate and confidential safeguarding records.
- Support those affected by safeguarding concerns.

All staff, trustees and volunteers are required to read, understand and comply with this policy.

5. DESIGNATED SAFEGUARDING LEADS

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Tracy Sheppard
Project Manager

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Martine Delaney

Mediator

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- Receiving safeguarding concerns.
 - Assessing risk.
 - Making referrals where appropriate.
 - Maintaining safeguarding records.
 - Supporting staff and volunteers.
 - Monitoring safeguarding practice within the organisation.
 - Ensuring safeguarding training remains current.
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6. TYPES OF ABUSE

Children

Abuse and neglect may include:

Physical Abuse

Deliberately causing physical harm to a child.

Emotional Abuse

Persistent emotional maltreatment affecting a child's emotional development.

Sexual Abuse

Forcing or enticing a child into sexual activities whether or not the child understands what is happening.

Neglect

Persistent failure to meet a child's physical or psychological needs.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Including county lines activity, coercion into criminal behaviour, drug distribution or gang activity.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Where a child is manipulated or coerced into sexual activity.

Online Abuse

Including grooming, exploitation, coercion, harassment, sharing of harmful content and technology-facilitated abuse.

Domestic Abuse

Children may be harmed directly or indirectly through exposure to domestic abuse.

Radicalisation

The process through which a person is drawn into terrorism or extremist ideology.

[\[leap.hilli...don.gov.uk\]](#), [\[gov.uk\]](#), [\[viewonline.lgfl.net\]](#)

Adults at Risk

Abuse may take many forms including:

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Financial or material abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Neglect and acts of omission
- Self-neglect
- Modern slavery
- Discriminatory abuse
- Organisational abuse
- Digital and cyber-enabled abuse

[\[gov.uk\]](#), [\[lgfl.net\]](#)

7. RECOGNISING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS

Staff, trustees and volunteers should remain alert to:

- Sudden behavioural changes.
- Signs of fear, anxiety or withdrawal.
- Unexplained injuries.
- Signs of neglect.
- Disclosures of abuse.
- Concerns raised by family members or professionals.
- Evidence of controlling or coercive behaviour.
- Indicators of exploitation.
- Concerns arising through online communication.

A person does not need to disclose abuse directly for a safeguarding concern to exist.

8. RESPONDING TO A DISCLOSURE

Where a child or adult at risk discloses abuse:

DO

- Stay calm.
- Listen carefully.
- Take the person seriously.
- Reassure them they have done the right thing.
- Explain what will happen next.
- Record information accurately.
- Report immediately to the DSL.

DO NOT

- Promise confidentiality.
 - Ask leading questions.
 - Investigate yourself.
 - Express shock or disbelief.
 - Contact the alleged perpetrator.
 - Delay reporting.
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9. REPORTING CONCERNS

Any immediate risk of significant harm should be reported to:

- Police: 999
- Emergency Services: 999

Where concerns are not immediate emergencies:

1. Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
2. Complete an organisation safeguarding concern record.
3. The DSL will determine whether referral is required.

Where appropriate referrals may be made to:

- Children's Social Care
- Adult Social Care
- The Police
- Health Services
- Safeguarding Partnerships

10. ALLEGATIONS AGAINST STAFF, TRUSTEES OR VOLUNTEERS

Any allegation that a staff member, trustee or volunteer:

- Has harmed a child or adult at risk;
- May have harmed a child or adult at risk;
- Has committed a criminal offence;
- May present a risk to vulnerable people;

must be reported immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or, if they are the subject of the concern, directly to the Deputy DSL and appropriate statutory agencies.

No internal investigation should commence until advice has been received from safeguarding professionals or police.

11. INFORMATION SHARING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis.

Confidentiality must never prevent action being taken to protect a child or adult at risk.

Information sharing decisions will comply with:

- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Human Rights Act 1998

while recognising that safeguarding takes precedence where there is risk of significant harm.

12. TRAINING

All staff, trustees and volunteers will:

- Receive safeguarding induction training.
 - Be informed of reporting procedures.
 - Undertake regular safeguarding refresher training.
 - Understand professional boundaries and codes of conduct.
 - Receive additional role-specific safeguarding training where appropriate.
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13. SAFER RECRUITMENT

TalkFIRST is committed to safer recruitment and selection practices including:

- Appropriate references.
 - Verification of identity.
 - Verification of qualifications where relevant.
 - DBS checks where required.
 - Ongoing monitoring and supervision.
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14. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if:

- Legislation changes;
- Government guidance changes;
- Significant safeguarding incidents occur; or
- Organisational changes require revision.

Safeguarding policy August 2026

Approved by: Tracy Sheppard

Date Approved: August 2026

Next Review Date: August 2027