

Duncan Private Hire Safeguarding Policy

Protection from abuse is an integral part of the policy and practice of all Duncan's workings with, or coming into contact with, vulnerable children/adults.

The broad definition of a vulnerable adult is:

'A person who is 18 years of age or over, and 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/herself, or unable to protect him/herself against significant harm or serious exploitation'.

People with learning disabilities, mental health problems, older people and disabled people may fall within this definition.

All vulnerable children/adults have a right to protection from harm.

We must ensure that:

- All vulnerable children/adults, whatever their age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have the right to protection from abuse.
- All suspicion and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff have a responsibility to report concerns to their appropriate line manager.
- All partner agencies and organisations must co-operate with each other on issues relating to the identification, investigation, treatment and prevention of abuse of vulnerable children/adults.

Our Values, Principles and Beliefs of Duncan's are that:

- All vulnerable children/adults have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation
- Abuse of vulnerable children/adults is never acceptable
- We have a commitment to protecting vulnerable children/adults with/for whom we work
- When we work with partners, they have a responsibility to meet minimum standards for protection of vulnerable children/adults in their programmes

Core Values and Principles:

- Vulnerable children/adults have the right to privacy, dignity, independence, self-determination, choice, fulfilment and the maintenance of all the rights and entitlements associated with citizenship

- A person's right to involvement in decision-making is promoted to the fullest capacity
- A person is enabled to protect him/herself from harm
- Involvement of others significant to the person's life is identified and supported
- The response is appropriate and only as intensive as the situation demands
- A vulnerable adult and the alleged abuser have the right to the protection of the law
- A vulnerable adult will have the opportunity and right to comment or complain about the service they receive
- Vulnerable children/adults will have the opportunity and right to independent advice and advocacy when they request it. This will also apply to those vulnerable children/adults who are incapable of making such a request but are deemed in need of such independent advice and advocacy
- The awareness and understanding of other agencies, organisations and the public is raised and with it, a commitment to respond

Policy Aims

The aim of Duncan's Policy on the Safeguarding is to promote good practice:

- Providing vulnerable children/adults with appropriate safety and protection
- Allowing all staff to make informed and confident responses to specific issues on the protection of vulnerable children/adults

Definitions and Indicators of Abuse

- Physical Abuse – includes hitting, slapping, pushing, and misuse of medication, undue restraint or inappropriate sanctions. Possible indicators include multiple bruising, which is not consistent with the explanation given; cowering and flinching; unusually sleepy or docile
- Sexual Abuse – includes rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the vulnerable adult has not, or could not, consent and/or was pressured into consenting. Possible indicators include unexplained and uncharacteristic changes in behaviour; excessive washing; deliberate self-harm
- Psychological Abuse – includes threats of harm or abandonment, humiliation, verbal or racial abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. Possible indicators include anxiety, confusion or general resignation; loss of confidence; excessive or inappropriate craving for attention
- Financial Abuse – includes theft, fraud, pressure around wills, property or inheritance, misuse or misappropriation of benefits. Possible indicators include unexplained or sudden inability to pay bills; sudden withdrawal of money from accounts; personal possessions going missing.
- Neglect and/or Acts of Omission – includes failure to access medical care or services, failure to give prescribed medication, poor nutrition or lack of heating. Possible indicators include poor hygiene and cleanliness; repeated infections; reluctant contact with health and social care agencies. Whilst not classified as an individual category of abuse, racial and

homo-phobic motivated abuse can take any of the above forms and needs to be noted
Prevention of Abuse – Good Practice

- Wherever possible, abuse must be prevented. Creating 'safe care' or support for vulnerable people involves a holistic approach, which is centred upon the needs of the cared-for/supported person. It also recognises that this will only be achieved through effective recruitment, induction, support, training and management of staff
- Staff are encouraged to be alert and to feel confident about reporting abuse. Staff, who make confidential disclosures or 'whistle-blow' are supported and protected
- Staff are knowledgeable about signs and causes of abuse in both community and service settings. Detailed knowledge and understanding of procedures are underpinned by appropriate and ongoing training and support
- A good balance is maintained between confidentiality and positive information sharing

Duncan's Code of Conduct for Working with Vulnerable children/adults

Staff must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or abuse vulnerable children/adults
- Develop physical or sexual relationships with vulnerable children/adults
- Develop relationships with vulnerable children/adults, which could in any way be deemed inappropriate or exploitative
- Act in ways that may be abusive or place vulnerable children/adults at risk of abuse
- Use language, make suggestions or offer advice, which is inappropriate, offensive or abusive
- Behave in an inappropriate or sexually provocative manner
- Do things of a personal nature that vulnerable children/adults can do for themselves
- Condone, or participate in the behaviour of vulnerable children/adults, which is illegal, abusive or unsafe
- Intentionally act in ways intended to shame, humiliate or degrade vulnerable children/adults.
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favour particular vulnerable children/adults to the exclusion of others

It is Vital for all Staff in Contact with Vulnerable children/adults to:

- Be aware of situations, which may present risks
- Plan and organise the work and the workplace to minimise risks
- Be visible in working with vulnerable children/adults – as far as is humanly possible
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues of concern to be discussed
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behaviour does not go unchallenged

What we will do:

Duncan's will meet our commitment to protect vulnerable children/adults from abuse through the following means:

Awareness:

We will ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the issues of vulnerable children/adults and the problem of abuse of vulnerable children/adults and the risks

Prevention:

We will ensure, through awareness and good practice, that all staff and volunteers minimise the risk to vulnerable children/adults

Reporting:

We will ensure that all staff are clear about what steps to take where concerns arise regarding the safety of vulnerable children/adults

Responding:

We will ensure that action is taken to support and protect vulnerable children/adults where concerns arise regarding possible abuse

Responding to Allegations or Suspicions:

It is not the responsibility of anyone working in Duncan's, in a paid or unpaid capacity, to decide whether the abuse of vulnerable children/adults has taken place. There is however a responsibility to act on any concerns through contact with the appropriate authorities. Duncan's will assure all staff that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith reports his or her concerns that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a vulnerable adult. Where there is a complaint made, there may be three types of investigation:

- A criminal investigation
- A protection of vulnerable children/adults' investigation
- A disciplinary or misconduct investigation

Confidentiality:

Every effort must be made to ensure that confidentiality is maintained for all concerned. Information should be handled and disseminated on a need to know basis only. Information must be stored in a secure place with limited access to the designated people, in line with data protection.

Direct Barring Services (DBS) Checks

All Duncan's staff will undergo and successful pass "Enhanced" Direct Barring Services (DBS) Checks as standard prior to the commencement of their employment