

Duncan Private Hire – Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

Duncan Private Hire is committed to safeguarding and protecting vulnerable children and adults who come into contact with our services. We recognise that protection from abuse is a fundamental right and integral to our operational standards.

A vulnerable adult is defined as any person aged 18 or over who, due to disability, age, illness, or mental health, may require community care services and is unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.

Our duty extends equally to all vulnerable children and adults, ensuring they are safeguarded from abuse or neglect in every interaction with Duncan Private Hire.

2. Our Commitment

We are dedicated to:

- Upholding the rights of vulnerable children and adults to live free from abuse, regardless of age, culture, gender, disability, race, religion, or sexual identity.
- Responding promptly and appropriately to any suspicion or allegation of abuse.
- Ensuring all staff understand their responsibility to report concerns without delay.
- Working collaboratively with partner organisations to prevent, identify, and respond effectively to safeguarding concerns.

3. Core Values and Principles

- Vulnerable individuals have the right to dignity, privacy, independence, and self-determination.
- We promote the fullest possible involvement of vulnerable people in decisions affecting their lives.
- Support networks significant to the individual are respected and involved where appropriate.
- Responses to safeguarding concerns are proportionate and tailored to the situation.
- Both the vulnerable individual and the alleged abuser are entitled to legal protection and fair treatment.
- Vulnerable people have the right to comment, complain, and access independent advice or advocacy.

4. Policy Objectives

Our safeguarding policy aims to:

- Provide safe environments and protection for vulnerable children and adults.
- Equip staff with the knowledge and confidence to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns effectively.

- Foster an organisational culture that prioritises the welfare and safety of vulnerable individuals.

5. Recognising Abuse

Abuse can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- **Physical Abuse:** Includes hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, or inappropriate restraint. Indicators may include unexplained bruises or unusual behaviour.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Involves any non-consensual sexual activity or exploitation. Signs may include behavioural changes or self-harm.
- **Psychological Abuse:** Encompasses threats, humiliation, isolation, or verbal abuse. Symptoms can include anxiety, withdrawal, or loss of confidence.
- **Financial Abuse:** Covers theft, fraud, coercion over financial matters, or misuse of benefits. Possible signs include sudden financial difficulties or missing possessions.
- **Neglect:** Failure to provide necessary care, medical attention, or basic needs. Indicators include poor hygiene, malnutrition, or frequent illness.

Racial, homophobic, or other discriminatory abuse may overlap with the above categories and will be addressed accordingly.

6. Prevention and Good Practice

Preventing abuse requires a proactive, holistic approach focused on the needs of vulnerable individuals. This includes:

- Rigorous staff recruitment, training, and supervision.
- Promoting awareness and vigilance among all team members.
- Supporting staff who report concerns through a protected whistleblowing process.
- Balancing confidentiality with the need for appropriate information sharing.

7. Code of Conduct

All staff must:

- Treat vulnerable children and adults with respect, dignity, and care.
- Avoid any form of physical, sexual, emotional, or discriminatory behaviour.
- Refrain from inappropriate relationships or conduct that could be seen as exploitative.
- Never engage in or condone illegal or unsafe behaviour.
- Act professionally and challenge any poor or abusive practice.
- Maintain clear boundaries and ensure actions prioritise the individual's well-being.

8. Responsibilities of Staff

Staff working with vulnerable individuals must:

- Stay alert to situations posing potential risks.
- Organise their work environment to maximise safety.
- Maintain visible and accountable practice.
- Foster a culture of openness where concerns can be raised and addressed promptly.

9. Our Safeguarding Commitment

Duncan Private Hire will:

- Ensure all staff and volunteers understand safeguarding risks and issues.
- Promote best practice to minimise harm.
- Provide clear guidance on how to report concerns.
- Act swiftly to support and protect those at risk.

10. Responding to Concerns

It is not the role of staff to determine if abuse has occurred but to report concerns immediately to designated safeguarding officers or appropriate authorities. Investigations may include:

- Criminal proceedings
- Safeguarding investigations
- Internal disciplinary processes

Duncan Private Hire guarantees full support and protection for any employee who reports concerns in good faith.

11. Confidentiality

All safeguarding information will be handled sensitively and confidentially. Details will be shared strictly on a “need to know” basis and stored securely in line with data protection laws.

12. Recruitment and DBS Checks

To protect vulnerable individuals, all staff at Duncan Private Hire undergo enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks before commencing employment.

Signed: electronically signed

Peter Simpson

Position: Director

Date: 14 May 2025