



Dedicated to giving practical and emotional support to all in the Debenham area who care for those with dementia.

Safeguarding Adults and Children at risk of harm policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define how THE DEBENHAM PROJECT operates to safeguard adults and children at risk of harm in order to;

- Protect them from harm.
- Provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding, within the DEBENHAM PROJECT.
- Acknowledge people living with dementia and their carers in a Person-Centred way, focusing on empowering individuals with dementia to make informed decisions while actively preventing abuse and neglect.
- Incorporates principles like early risk identification, regular assessments, and collaborative efforts between caregivers, healthcare professionals, and local authorities, all while ensuring the carers themselves are also supported and protected from potential stress and burnout; this should be achieved by adhering to the core safeguarding principles of empowerment, prevention, proportionality, protection, partnership, and accountability.
- Recognises we have a duty of care and we are committed to the protection and safety of everyone who comes in to contact with our organisation; including children and adults at risk who are involved as visitors and as participants in all of our activities both on and off site.
- Maintain a duty to safeguard and support our staff and volunteers.

Furthermore, this policy is a fundamental part of our governance responsibilities and priorities. The Trustees' responsibilities include ensuring that the organisation provides a safe environment and protects staff, volunteers, and anyone who comes into contact with it from abuse or maltreatment of any kind.

- We are committed to ensuring that our safeguarding practice reflects our legal responsibilities, government guidance and Suffolk Safeguarding Partnership requirements.

- THE DEBENHAM PROJECT acknowledges that it has responsibilities for the safety and care of children under the Children Act 1989 and 2004 and Working Together 2023.
- It recognises its responsibilities to safeguard Adults at Risk of Harm under the Care Act 2014.
- The organisation will act in accordance with all relevant legislation including the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the Terrorism Act (2000) and the Modern Slavery Act 2015.
- We will fulfil our duty to report Serious Incidents, including safeguarding, as part of our governance and reporting responsibilities to the Charity Commission.

This policy needs to be considered in conjunction with the safeguarding procedures and the wider policies and procedures for the organisation (which can be accessed at <https://the-debenham-project.org.uk/trust-policies-and-other-documents/>) and which when combined, develop a comprehensive framework for safeguarding.

2. Definitions

- **Adult at risk of abuse or neglect** as defined by the Care Act 2014 – Someone over the age of 18 years who has care and support needs, is experiencing, or is at risk of abuse or neglect as a result of their care and support needs and is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it. This includes someone who has care and support needs but is not currently receiving care or support from a health or care service they may still be an Adult at risk.
- **Child at risk of abuse or neglect:** Although the Debenham Project does not directly come into contact with children we are aware there may be occasions when a volunteer doing a Home Visit to assist with matters relating to an Adult living with Dementia, a child or grandchild may be present therefore a **Child** is defined as those persons aged under 18 years old, and under “safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children” as defined in Working Together 2023 i.e. Providing help and support to meet the needs of children as soon as the problem emerges, protect them from maltreatment, whether that is within or outside the home, including online.
- **Abuse or neglect:** Preventing impairment of an adult’s or child’s mental and physical health or development and ensuring that adults can live, and children can grow up, with circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.

3. Persons Affected

- This policy applies to everyone working/ volunteering on behalf of THE DEBENHAM PROJECT including the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, contractors and agency staff.

4. Safeguarding policy

- We believe everyone has a responsibility to promote the well-being of all Adults and Children at risk of harm, to keep them safe and to practise in a way that protects them.
- We recognise that while it is the responsibility of the relevant statutory agencies to determine whether or not abuse has taken place. The Debenham Project

acknowledges that any Safeguarding concerns must be reported and that all staff, volunteers, trustee and contractors will know how to recognise and report safeguarding concerns. (See Appendix 2)

- It is expected that Volunteers will be required to undergo DBS checks if appropriate to the risks and nature of their involvement in the project ie If a volunteer has regular and /or extended one-to-one contact (outside open group and other supervised activities) with an Adult at risk of harm which might lead to a closer and perhaps dependent relationship and or a potential risk of abuse. This will be carried out by an External Organisation e.g Community Action Suffolk or another recognised professional organisation.
- It is expected that all involved within THE DEBENHAM PROJECT will undertake safeguarding training to enable them to be aware of the signs of physical or mental abuse and take appropriate action in the event of any concerns. This will be contracted in from Community Action Suffolk or another recognised professional organisation.
- It is expected that all who are involved within THE DEBENHAM in providing care and support to families and individual living with dementia (or other forms of vulnerability) will follow the practise outlined in the relevant policies of the THE DEBENHAM PROJECT.
- The operational policies of The DEBENHAM PROJECT will also address the potential risk of abuse to volunteers in the course of their duties and that they are aware of the process of how to report it. This may included the need for a Risk Assessment.
- We recognise that all Adults and Children at risk whatever their age, ability, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual identity have equal rights to protection from abuse.
- Adults will be included in swift and personalised safeguarding responses, in line with the Six principles of safeguarding for adults.
- We are committed to inter agency collaboration and information sharing to safeguard Adult and Children at risk of harm.
- We will ensure all the of the organisation's operations and activities are designed and delivered with effective safeguarding in mind to protect Adults and Children from abuse.
- Recording, storing and using information professionally and securely, will be in line with data protection legislation and guidance and IT policies and procedures.

5. Safeguarding and Welfare

- The Debenham Project will encourage all staff, volunteers and trustees in feeling able to raise concerns and feel supported in fulfilling their safeguarding role by -
- Ensuring that Safeguarding for adults is person-led and outcome and focused, engaging the adult at risk in a conversation about how best to respond to their safeguarding situation.

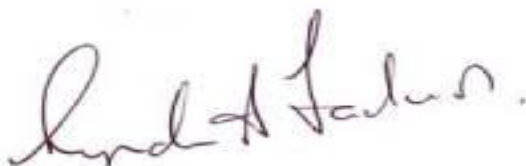
- Considering issues of capacity, consent and decision making; including the six key adult principles of safeguarding adults. (see appendix 1)
- Ensuring a senior board trustee lead takes leadership responsibility for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements, contact details in the accompanying procedures and posters.
- Having a Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Lead for the organisation. Contact details of Safeguarding procedures will be widely shared with all Trustees, Volunteers and Staff.
- Our safeguarding Adult and Children at risk of harm policies and procedures are available on our website, or on demand, for anyone using our services to know what to do if they have concerns.
- Ensuring that we have effective complaints, grievance and whistleblowing policies and procedures.
- In the event of a Safeguarding concern, contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead Dr JPS Fielder Telephone Number 01728 685518

Review

This policy and related guidance will be monitored by the Chair and the Board of Trustees on a regular basis for compliance and will be reviewed at least 3 yearly, but subject to any changes in government policy and advice, and/or local professional advice in the interim.

Date approved or amended	Amendments	Signed
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Both the policy and the system and current persons and organisations have been reviewed by the Trustees (May 2025) and agreed in the light of experience of use.



(Chairman) 10th June 2025

Appendix 1

Key six key principles that underpin safeguarding adults work

- **Empowerment** – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent depending on their level of capacity at the time.
- **Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs
- **Proportionality** – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
- **Protection** – Support and representation for those in greatest need
- **Partnership** – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse
- **Accountability** – accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding

Making Safeguarding Personal

Making Safeguarding Personal is a shift in culture and practice in response to what we now know about what makes safeguarding more or less effective from the perspective of the person being safeguarded. It is about seeing people and families as experts in their own lives and working alongside them in a way that is consistent with their rights and capacity and that prevents abuse occurring wherever possible.

Safeguarding should be person-led and outcome focused, engaging the adult at risk in a conversation about how best to respond to their safeguarding situation in a way that enhances involvement, choice and control as well as improving quality of life, wellbeing and safety. In most cases this can only happen by making sure people get the care and support that they need. It is also important that the people who care for them also get this support and recognition. Most importantly it is about listening and providing the options that permit individuals to help themselves.

It is also important that all safeguarding partners take a broad community approach to establishing safeguarding arrangements. It is vital that all organisations recognise that Safeguarding Adults arrangements are there to protect individuals, bearing in mind different preferences, histories, circumstances and lifestyles.

In order to evidence that the Safeguarding process is personalised, it is necessary to collect information about the extent to which this shift has a positive impact on people's lives.

Whilst every effort must be made to work with adults experiencing abuse within the present legal framework there will be some occasions on which adults at risk will choose to remain in dangerous situations. It may be that even after careful scrutiny of the legal framework, staff will conclude that they have no power to gain access to a particular adult at risk. Staff may find that they have no power to remove the adult from a situation of risk, investigate the adult's financial affairs, or intervene positively because the adult refuses all help or wants to terminate contact with the professionals.

It may not always be possible to provide satisfactory solutions. At the age of 18, people are legally entitled to adult status regardless of any disability or impairment they may have. It is, therefore, essential that wherever possible it is the adult at risk who will decide on the chosen course of action, taking into account the impact of the adult at risk's mental capacity where relevant. However, the people and organisations caring for, or assisting them, must do everything they can to identify and prevent abuse happening wherever possible and evidence their efforts.

In these extremely difficult circumstances, staff will be expected to continue to exercise as much vigilance as possible.

Safeguarding Leads will give full support to staff over problems when handling cases of adults remaining in high-risk situations, provided that:

- It is evident from case records that Safeguarding Adults procedures have been properly followed;
- Every effort has been made, on a multi-agency basis, to intervene positively to protect the adult at risk;
- Legal advice has been obtained and acted upon and ultimately that the adult at risk has been fully consulted and involved as far as practicable in every decision relating to their situation

Capacity, Consent and Decision Making

The consideration of capacity is crucial at all stages of safeguarding adults procedures. For example determining the ability of an adult at risk to make lifestyle choices, such as choosing to remain in a situation where they risk abuse; determining whether a particular act or transaction is abusive or consensual; or determining how much an adult at risk can be involved in making decisions in a given situation.

The key development affecting this area of work is the implementation of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, which provides a statutory framework to empower and protect adults at risk who may not be able to make their own decisions. It makes it clear who can take decisions in which situations and how they should go about this. It enables people to plan ahead for a time when they may lose capacity. It applies to anyone aged 16 years and over therefore appropriate liaison needs to occur for young people aged 16 to 18 years with Children's Services where relevant as part of Safeguarding Adults work.

The whole Act is underpinned by a set of five key principles:

A presumption of Capacity -Every adult has the right to make his or her own decisions and must be assumed to have capacity to do so unless it is proved otherwise;

The right for individuals to be supported to make their own decisions -People must be given all appropriate help before anyone concludes that they cannot make their own decisions;

That individuals must retain the right to make what might be seen as eccentric or **Unwise Decisions**;

Best interests -Anything done for or on behalf of people without capacity must be in their best interests; and **Least restrictive intervention** -Anything done for or on behalf of people without capacity should be the least restrictive of their basic rights and freedoms.