



PORTSMOUTH DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION

Portsmouth Down Syndrome Association - Child Protection Statement and Policy

1. STATEMENT

Portsmouth Down Syndrome Association (Portsmouth DSA) has a duty to ensure that it contributes to the protection and safety of all the children with whom it comes into contact. Any suspicion of abuse will be promptly and appropriately responded to.

It is the role of the statutory agencies (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Social Services, Police and NSPCC) to formally investigate concerns about the protection of children as part of their duties within the Children Act 1989 (Section 47). This legislation gives the local authority responsibility to make enquiries when there are concerns that a child may be suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm and to take action to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.

All trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors should be introduced to and remain familiar with this Statement and Policy.

It is the responsibility of every trustee/employee/relevant volunteer/contractor to identify and report concerns about harm and to take part in, as required, the process of investigation.

Trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors are not trained to deal with situations of abuse or to decide if abuse has occurred.

This policy takes into account:

- a) The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child
- b) The Children's Act of 1989 (updated 2004)
- c) The Department of Education's 'Working together to safeguard children 1999, (updated 2018): A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children'
- d) What to do if you are worried a child is being abused. Advice for practitioners, March 2015.
- e) The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which became law in May 2018. Please see Portsmouth DSA's Data Protection Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy for further details of how the charity keeps personal information private and secure.

2. PRINCIPLES

CHILDREN ARE OF PARAMOUNT CONSIDERATION

Portsmouth DSA is committed to a service, which gives priority to the welfare of children. The individual's feelings and individual circumstances are to be taken into account at all times. Whilst Portsmouth DSA recognises its obligation to work with families, Portsmouth DSA recognises the right of children to be of

paramount importance and will take precedence over any obligations to support parents and carers should any conflict of interest arise.

THE CONCERNS OF CHILDREN WILL BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY

Portsmouth DSA's trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors will treat every concern seriously and will act without delay or prejudice in the interests of the individual and within the spirit of the individual's voice being heard.

PROTECTION IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

All Portsmouth DSA's trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors have a responsibility to pass on any concerns immediately they occur in accordance with the Portsmouth DSA's Protection Procedures in the case of suspected abuse. Priority should be given by all parties to Protection issues.

Trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors are required to report any convictions (except motoring offences not resulting in disqualification) that occur subsequent to appointment, to the board of Trustees without delay. The attached 'Disclosure of Information Policy' will ensure trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors are protected from retaliatory actions.

WORKING TOGETHER PROMOTES SAFETY

The Portsmouth DSA's trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors will work together to ensure the safety and welfare of members. Cooperation between the different disciplines, with outside agencies and with carers/families as appropriate, is acknowledged as being of critical importance in protecting children. All trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors are required to establish a good working relationship with a clear knowledge of the operational process of Local Child Protection Agencies as the need arises and follow guidance in The Department of Education's 'Working together to safeguard children 1999 (updated 2018): A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children'. Portsmouth DSA's trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors must not hold onto information, which may prove vital in ensuring protection.

ALL TRUSTEES/EMPLOYEES/RELEVANT VOLUNTEERS/CONTRACTORS ARE AWARE OF THE PORTSMOUTH DSA CHILD PROTECTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

At the point of induction trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors will be given a copy of the Portsmouth DSA Child Protection Statement and Policy. They will be informed that they will be expected to follow it. Trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors will make every effort to keep up to date with any changes regarding procedures. The Policy will be reviewed annually and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will remind the Board that the review is due and oversee the process.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

In order to implement the Statement and Policy, Portsmouth DSA will ensure that:

- a) All trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/and contractors having access to/working with children must have criminal record checks on appointment. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) records will be maintained by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- b) All service providers are carefully selected.
- c) Parents, carers, children and adults are able to raise concerns if there is anything they are not happy about. Information on how to contact Trustees is made available to members.
- d) One trusted appropriate member of staff will be appointed by Portsmouth DSA as the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

- e) All trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors will have criminal disclosures carried out on an ongoing basis as condition of signing up to the DBS update service.
- f) The DSL will remind trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors of the need for renewal and will regularly check the status of each DBS check (every 6 months).
- g) The DSL to complete awareness training on child protection every 3 years and feedback any updates to the board of trustees. All parties (trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors should be aware of advisory information outlining good practice and be informed about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.

Occasional relevant volunteers who may offer support to the running of events or group sessions are carefully selected and made aware of who the DSL is.

All trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contactors should be encouraged to demonstrate exemplary behaviour in order to promote children's welfare and reduce the likelihood of allegations being made. The following are common sense examples of how to create a positive culture and climate.

Good practice means:

- a) Always working in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging open communication with no secrets).
- b) Treating all children equally, and with respect and dignity.
- c) Always putting the welfare of each child first.
- d) Maintaining a safe and appropriate distance with children.
- e) Involving parents/carers wherever possible. For example, encouraging them to take responsibility for their children.
- f) Being an excellent role model - this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the company of young people.
- g) Giving enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- h) Recognising the developmental needs and capacity of children, avoiding pushing them against their will.

The following should never be sanctioned. You should never:

- a) Engage in rough, physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- b) Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate touching.
- c) Allow children to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- d) Make sexually suggestive comments to a child, even in fun.
- e) Reduce a child to tears as a form of control.
- f) Fail to act upon and record any allegations made by a child.
- g) Do things of a personal nature for children or disabled adults, that they can do for themselves or their parents/carers can do for them e.g. toileting.

4. TRAINING

In addition to preselection checks, the safeguarding process includes training to help the DSL:

- a) Analyse their own practice against established good practice likely to result in allegations being made.
- b) Recognise their responsibilities and report any concerns about suspected poor practice or possible abuse.
- c) Respond to concerns expressed by a child or young person.
- d) Work safely and effectively with children

Portsmouth DSA requires:

The DSL to undergo child protection awareness training, to ensure the charity's practice is exemplary and to facilitate the development of a positive culture towards good practice. Trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors to be familiar with the Child Protection Statement and Policy for the organisation and be aware of advisory information outlining good practice and informing them about what to do if they have concerns about the behaviour of an adult towards a young person.

5. PROCEDURES IN THE CASE OF SUSPECTED ABUSE

It is neither the responsibility of Portsmouth DSA's trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors to establish all the necessary details from the child, nor to establish the truth.

The responsibility of all parties is to ensure that concerns are reported and that issues raised are listened to and investigated appropriately by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or external agencies.

It is not necessary to have definite knowledge that a person may be suffering or inflicting any specific abuse or that the concerns fit precisely within the definitions. It is often likely that there will be general concerns or suspicions which will need further discussion and advice.

Any trustee/employee/relevant volunteer/contractor to whom an allegation is made or observes such abuse must:

- a) Listen to a child who is telling or indicating that something abusive has happened to him/her or someone else.
- b) Allow the child to tell you as much as they want to, without interrupting. Remember you need to record this.
- c) Limit any questions to clarify what happened and strictly avoid leading the child by making suggestions or introducing your own ideas in the questions. Do not try to investigate further.
- d) Tell the informing child that you will make sure that the right people follow up what they have said.
- e) Reassure the child that they will be supported by a person of their choice at all times.
- f) Ask them if there is anything they immediately need to feel safe and assure them that you will try as far as practicable to follow their wishes.

Where a person's identity or contact address is not known, trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors must make every effort to obtain this information. The lack of a clear identity should not prevent a referral to a Local Special Investigation Unit.

Trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors can never give guarantees of confidentiality to children wishing to confide something serious. They should guarantee that they will only pass on the information to the minimum number of people who must be told in order to resolve the problem.

Trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors should without delay pass any concerns to the DSL. Concerns that are raised must be initially addressed the same working day. Where the DSL is unavailable, contact with the Chair of the Trustees should be made.

In situations where a person's health is at risk and/or urgent medical treatment is required, immediate action should first be taken to ensure the well-being of the person.

The trustee/employee/relevant volunteer/contractor who first raises the concerns will make a fully written record of the circumstances and detail of the concern raised, signing and dating the record with a note of any other trustee/employee/relevant volunteer/contractor also present. (In the case of a disclosure, as soon as possible after a disclosure).

The DSL will refer the allegation to the MASH who may involve the police. The parents or carers of the child will be contacted as soon as possible following advice from the social services department.

6. CATEGORIES OF ABUSE

Concerns about children may come from a variety of sources. Such concerns must be understood in the light of definitions of abuse provided by the Department of Education's 'Working together to safeguard children 1999, (updated 2018): A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.'

PHYSICAL ABUSE

Physical abuse 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 feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes ill health to a child whom they are looking after. The situation is commonly described using terms such as 'fictitious illness by proxy'.

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

Emotional abuse involves conveying to the 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 they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being placed upon children. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill treatment of another. It may also involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), 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, or it may occur alone.

SEXUAL ABUSE

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or a young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape or buggery) or non-penetrative acts. They may include pornographic material or watching sexual activities, grooming or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

NEGLECT

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the person's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment) or clothing, failing to protect a child from physical harm or danger, inadequate supervision, use of inadequate care givers, lack of access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs and neglecting to act on overindulgence, which leads to the detriment of the individual's health and well being.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All Portsmouth DSA's trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors contribute to the safeguarding of children and protection processes and are required to be aware of their roles and responsibilities.

All Portsmouth DSA's trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors should be alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and know to whom they should report concerns or suspicions.

One trusted appropriate member of staff will be appointed as DSL to have front line responsibility for reported concerns. The DSL understands their responsibility to learn about child protection in accordance with their role and are informed on how to recognise the symptoms of possible abuse and liaise with other agencies.

Refer to the Department of Education's 'Working together to safeguard children 1999, (updated 2018): A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children' for guidance.

Refer to 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused. Advice for practitioners, March 2015' for guidance.

The DSL with designated responsibility for child protection should receive appropriate training.

Portsmouth DSA's trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors should exercise their protection responsibilities in response to any allegations and should ensure that they each have seen a copy of the protection policies.

All Portsmouth DSA's trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors have a responsibility to act upon any concerns or worries they may have and report these to the DSL without delay.

All Portsmouth DSA's trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors have a responsibility to share information and assist in the prevention and investigation of any actual or potential abuse.

All Portsmouth DSA's trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors have a responsibility to work within their sphere of competence and to limit their actions in line with their knowledge, skills and training.

All Portsmouth DSA's trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors will co-operate with statutory enquiries and act in accordance with the best interests of children at all times.

8. ASSESSMENT OF CONCERN

It is the DSL's responsibility to receive the information in order to make an appropriate judgement about proposed action and from that point manage the process. To do this he/she must assess it carefully in order to form a judgement about action.

Such analysis will need to take account of:

- a) The present safety of the child and any likely danger to that person if action is not taken.
- b) The seriousness of the alleged harm, or the implications from that harm on the person or others.
- c) The effect of the concerns on the child.
- d) The safety of other children using an implicated service.
- e) All explanations offered.
- f) Any relevant history of concerns.
- g) The context of the present concerns.

The DSL will refer to the Chair of the Board in order to achieve the best judgement as to any action required. The DSL and Chair of the Board will make a decision on how to share the information on a 'need to know' basis. All discussions, decisions and actions will be recorded by the DSL and stored securely.

In the event that worries or concerns are raised with the DSL, the DSL will refer to the following documents for guidance The Department of Education's '*Working together to safeguard children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children*' and '*What to do if you are worried a child is being abused*' and make a decision as to the agreed action. This may be:

Action Plan

- a) No action required. In this case, a summary report is made to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- b) No decision reached but sufficient concern exists to seek guidance from Social Services. A summary report is prepared, passed to the relevant person (as above). This must be done the same day a decision of concern is reached.
- c) A formal referral to the local Social Services and or Public Child Protection Teams. This should be done by the DSL and will require him/her giving as full information as possible to assist the relevant Social Services and the Police to assist in their work. The DSL should not investigate the action further without the direction of the outside agency.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY

Any treatment relating to concerns or reports of possible abuse must be treated in the strictest confidence. Trustees/employees/relevant volunteers/contractors who are aware of any information relating to the protection of children must immediately report this information to the DSL.

At all times the child's safety is paramount and only those with a right and a need to know will be given the appropriate information. The DSL and Chair of the Board will refer to the guidelines '*What to do if you are worried a child is being abused*'.

10. RECORDING OF INFORMATION

f) All records relating to protection issues must be kept safely and securely in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) May 2018 – see Portsmouth DSA's Data Protection Privacy Notice and Data Protection Policy for further details of how the charity keeps personal information private and secure.

All records must contain detailed information that can accurately be used in case of conferences and court proceedings.

When written records are being made, the language used by the child raising concerns must not be altered or amended.

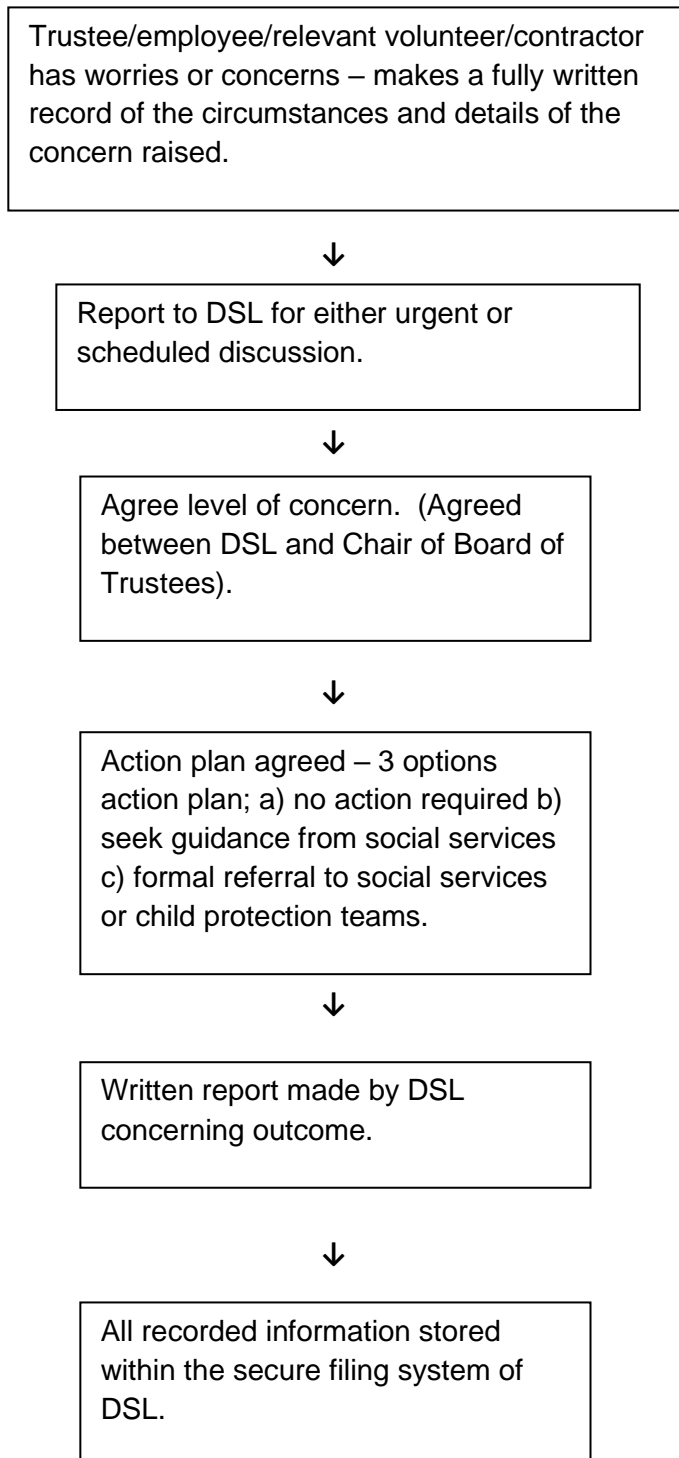
Recording should be undertaken as soon as is reasonably possible.

11. PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

It is very important that parents and carers are kept well informed about protection issues affecting their relative. However, Portsmouth DSA recognises the rights of children to be of paramount importance and this will take precedence over any obligations to support parents and carers should any conflict of interest arise.

12. ROUTE TO PROTECTION FLOWCHART

Portsmouth Down Syndrome Association



Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Alice Osborne
Portsmouth DSA,
The Sarah Duffen Centre,
The Belmont St Building,
Cottage Grove School Campus,
Chivers Close, Portsmouth PO5 1HG

Tel No: 07970 829685

Date Nominated: July 2020

Virtual Safeguarding Training for DSLs (Designated Safeguarding Leads) and Managers

Contact information

Referrals to Portsmouth Social Care

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 02392 688793 or 0845 671 0271

Out of Hours 0300 555 1373

Police 101

Portsmouth residents and practitioners should contact the Portsmouth City Council Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for advice if they are unsure whether or how to refer a child or family they are worried about. Email: pccraduty@portsmouthcc.gcsx.gov.uk or telephone 02392 688793. The out of office hours telephone is 0300 555 1373 (5pm – 8am weekdays, weekends and bank holidays).

Portsmouth Children and Families Service
Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
Portsmouth City Council
Floor 4
Civic Offices
Guildhall Square
Portsmouth PO1 2EA

For all emergency situations call 999.

- [Hampshire Police](#) – 101
- [NSPCC](#) Child Protection line - 0808 800 5000
- [Childline](#) - 0800 1111

Useful websites:

<http://www.portsmouthscb.org.uk>

www.saferportsmouth.org.uk

<http://ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/>