



**LONG DISTANCE**

**LDWA**

**WALKERS ASSOCIATION**

# Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy

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| Version           | Author        | Notes   |
|-------------------|---------------|---|
| V6 (October 2018) | Deirdre Flegg |   |
| V6.1              | Stuart Bain   | Policy Review   |
| V6.2              | Deirdre Flegg | Feedback on the revised policy. Tabled to NEC for approval. |
| V7.0              | Stuart Bain   | Approved by NEC 23/01/2021                                  |

## Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to describe the LDWA's responsibility with regard to safeguarding of children and young people.. It applies to all individuals involved in the LDWA.

The Long Distance Walkers Association acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, any government guidance and complies with best practice.

The LDWA values and encourages the involvement of all walkers in its activities. Through this Policy the LDWA is committed to promoting enjoyment of long distance walking and safeguarding the health, safety and general welfare of children and young people while in the company or care of LDWA volunteers or members.

The LDWA will support anyone who, in good faith, reports his or her concerns that a child or young person is at risk of being, or may actually be abused. All suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately, and handled with appropriate sensitivity.

This Policy is mandatory for all LDWA members, whether in a volunteer role or as ordinary members. It also applies to guests of the LDWA on social walks, challenge events or on social events.

## Background to the LDWA

The LDWA is an association of people with the common interest of walking long distances in rural, urban, mountainous or moorland areas. The LDWA allows like-minded long distance walkers to gain access to information on walking events and long distance routes across the UK. The LDWA comprises of 43 local groups across the UK who arrange social and challenge walk events. The LDWA is recognised as a national governing body (NGB) for rambling by Sport England, Sport Scotland and Sport Wales.

The National Executive Committee (NEC) is the governing body of the Long Distance Walking Association.

# Policy Statement

The Long Distance Walkers Association is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment. We accept our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people involved in long distance walking, in accordance with relevant legislation.

## Context

The circumstances in which members of the LDWA, acting on behalf of the LDWA, might come into contact with children and young people are limited. The LDWA is not a sporting body that coaches, teaches or otherwise cares for people in a sporting context, and none of the LDWA's volunteers take on such roles on behalf of the Association.

Children and young people are most likely to be involved with the LDWA in the following situations:

- On social walks, when accompanying parents or guardians
- On challenge events and in accordance with the rules prescribed. Children or young people may accompany parents or guardians who are helping at an event HQ or on an event checkpoint.

Other situations may occur from time to time, and this Policy applies in all cases.

Children and young people under the age of 18 may not participate in LDWA activities unless accompanied by a parent or person who is acting with implied or actual parental consent.

## Principles and Values

The LDWA acknowledges the duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice.

The policy recognises that the welfare and interests of children are paramount in all circumstances. It aims to ensure that regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, socio-economic background, all children:

- have a positive and enjoyable experience of walking activities with the LDWA in a safe and child centred environment; and
- are protected from abuse whilst participating in walking with the LDWA or outside of the activity.

The LDWA acknowledges that some children, including disabled children and young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to

abuse and we accept the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

As part of our safeguarding policy the LDWA will:

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and young people;
- ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is helped to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and young people;
- ensure appropriate action is taken in the event of incidents/concerns of abuse;
- provide support to the individual/s who raise or disclose the concern;
- ensure that confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored; and
- ensure robust safeguarding arrangements and procedures are in operation.

Accordingly, the LDWA will:

- provide a friendly welcome and promote the general welfare of all involved in its activities;
- recognise the rights of those at risk of harm as individuals and treat them with dignity and respect;
- raise awareness of the dangers to which children and young people may be susceptible; and
- develop appropriate procedures for responding to accidents, incidents and alleged or suspected harm.

## Definitions

In law a child is a person under the age of 18, but this policy document recognises that older children may prefer to be known as young people.

Abuse is a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by another person or persons. Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child either directly by inflicting harm, or indirectly, by failing to act to prevent harm. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them; or, more rarely, by a stranger. They may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

## Prevention

LDWA members should:

- Bear in mind that some actions, no matter how well intentioned, may be misinterpreted and leave all parties vulnerable.
- Be alert to any potential harm or inappropriate behaviour.
- Respect rights to privacy.

- Provide access for children and young people to discuss any concerns they may have.
- Speak to the LDWA's Designated Safeguarding Officer (the Risk Officer) if they have concerns about an individual's safety.
- Always work in an open environment (e.g. avoiding private or unobserved situations and encouraging everyone else to work in an open environment).
- Treat all children and young people equally, and with respect and dignity.
- Always put the welfare of each child or young person first, before achieving goals.
- Involve parents/carers wherever possible (e.g. for the responsibility of their children in changing rooms).
- Give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Recognise the developmental needs and capacity of children and young people - avoiding excessive training and not pushing them against their will.
- Secure parental consent in writing to act in loco parentis, if the need arises to give permission for the administration of emergency first aid and/or other medical treatment.
- Keep a written record of any injury that occurs, along with the details of any treatment given, in accordance with LDWA accident and injury procedures.
- Request written parental consent if LDWA members are required to transport young people in their cars.
- Exercise care when referring to young or vulnerable persons in any published material, either printed or on the internet. This includes event reports, newsletter articles, etc. Particular care is required when publishing photographs of individual children, for which parental consent should be obtained.
- Share concerns on any matter relating to actual or suspected abuse with the Chair of the Local Group where appropriate or the LDWA's Designated Safeguarding Officer.

LDWA members should not:

- Permit abusive behaviour by others or engage in it themselves.
- Be alone for substantial periods of time with a child or young person. If this is unavoidable through emergency or other event, then this should be with the knowledge of another LDWA member.
- Allow or engage in suggestive remarks, gestures or touching of a kind which may be misunderstood or unwelcome.
- Use language which may be regarded as hurtful or disrespectful.
- Let any allegations made by a child or young person go un-investigated, unrecorded or otherwise not acted upon.

## Designated Persons

At Local Group level, the local safeguarding representative is the Chair of the Local Group.

The Risk Officer, on the National Executive Committee is the LDWA Designated Safeguarding Officer.

## **Designated Safeguarding Officer: Responsibilities**

- Review and maintenance of this Safeguarding Policy;
- providing advice and guidance to Local Groups on Safeguarding issues;
- monitoring any incidents that are reported by Local Groups; and
- ultimately ensuring that appropriate action has been taken by the LDWA on any reported incidents of abuse.

## **Local Safeguarding Representative: Responsibilities**

The local safeguarding representative (or the Designated Safeguarding Officer, if appropriate) must inform and liaise with the relevant authorities (Local Authority Children's Services or Police, for the area in which the child or young person lives).

## **Review**

On an annual basis, the National Executive Committee will review the number of recorded incidents, allegations or complaints, and make changes to the Policy and Procedures where relevant.

This policy and related procedures will be reviewed and approved by the National Executive Committee annually, published to Local Group Chair's and Secretaries (who will be asked to confirm acceptance) and published to all members.

## **Appendix A - Relevant Legislation**

**Children Act 1989, and as strengthened by Children Act 2004** Provides inter alia the legislative framework for child protection in England and Wales.

### **Children [Scotland] Act 1995**

Provides legislative framework for Scotland's child protection system.

### **Social Services and Well-being [Wales] Act 2014 as updated 2019**

Together with statutory guidance on safeguarding November 2019.

### **The Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995**

### **Protection of Freedoms Act 2012**

Established the Disclosure and Barring service and amended some of the provisions relating to vulnerable groups, changed scope of 'regulated' activity and abolished 'controlled' activity.

### **Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims (Amendment) Act 2012**

Created new offence of causing or allowing the death of a child or vulnerable adult.

### **Equality Act 2010**

Replaced all existing anti discrimination legislation such as sex and race discrimination and disability discrimination.

### **Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2009**

Introduced the new Vetting and Barring Scheme and the role of the Independent Safeguarding Authority. The Act places a statutory duty on all those working with vulnerable groups to register and undergo an advanced vetting process with criminal sanctions for non-compliance. NOTE: LDWA members, whether acting as volunteers or participating in organised activities are not carrying out Regulated Activity and as such are not required to be checked.

### **Sexual Offences Act 2003**

The Sexual Offences Act introduced a number of new offences concerning adults at risk and children.

### **Serious Crime Act 2015**

Introduced new offence of controlling or coercive behaviour in intimate or familial relationships,

## Appendix B Glossary of terms: from 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018

***Physical abuse*** A form of abuse which 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 fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

***Emotional abuse*** Maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a 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 imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may 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, though it may occur alone.

***Sexual abuse*** Involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

***Child sexual exploitation*** Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

***Neglect*** The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.



Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to: a. provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment) b. protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger c. ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers) d. ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment .It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

***Extremism*** Goes beyond terrorism and includes people who target the vulnerable – including the young – by seeking to sow division between communities on the basis of race, faith or denomination; justify discrimination towards women and girls; persuade others that minorities are inferior; or argue against the primacy of democracy and the rule of law in our society. Extremism is defined in the Counter Extremism Strategy 2015 as the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist.

***Child criminal exploitation.*** As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

## Other relevant issues:

***Discrimination:*** abuse which centres on a difference or perceived difference with respect to race, disability or gender or any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act

***Forced marriage:*** term used to describe a marriage in which one or both parties are married without their consent or will [Ref: 'Antisocial behaviour and Policing Act' 2014]

## Signs and indicators of abuse

Abuse can take place in any context and by all manner of perpetrator. Children and young people may be abused by someone within the organisation; group members and other volunteers may become aware that abuse or neglect is happening outside the setting of the LDWA.

Recognising child abuse is not easy. It is not the responsibility of an individual member to decide whether or not child abuse has taken place or if a child is at significant risk of harm from someone. Individuals do however, have both a responsibility and duty to act, as set out in this policy and procedure, in order that the appropriate agencies can investigate and take any necessary action to protect a child.

The following publication offers help in learning about the signs and symptoms of abuse: 'Definitions and signs of abuse' NSPCC Fact Sheet December 2020:

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1188/definitions-signs-child-abuse.pdf>