



Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy

Purpose

Dragon Care is committed to protecting adults who may be at risk from abuse, neglect or exploitation. We believe that every person has the right to live free from harm, fear and discrimination. This policy sets out how Dragon Care prevents abuse, recognises risk, responds to concerns and works in partnership to keep people safe.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All staff, volunteers and partners have a duty to act if they are concerned about the safety or wellbeing of a person we support.

1. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All staff, volunteers and anyone working on behalf of Dragon Care
- All adults we support, particularly those who may be at increased risk due to disability, illness, age, dependency, or social isolation
- All settings in which Dragon Care operates

It should be read alongside Dragon Care's Safeguarding, Whistleblowing, Complaints, Care & Support Planning and Medication Management policies.

2. Principles

Our safeguarding approach is based on:

- **Empowerment** – supporting people to make their own choices and stay safe
- **Prevention** – reducing risk through awareness, planning and good practice

- **Proportionality** – responding in the least intrusive way possible
- **Protection** – acting decisively when harm or risk is identified
- **Partnership** – working with families, commissioners and statutory agencies
- **Accountability** – clear roles and transparent decision-making

3. What Is Abuse?

Abuse may be a single act or repeated acts and can be intentional or unintentional.

Types of abuse include:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect or acts of omission
- Financial or material abuse
- Discriminatory abuse
- Domestic abuse
- Organisational abuse
- Self-neglect
- Modern slavery and exploitation
- Online abuse

Any behaviour that harms, exploits, intimidates or degrades a person we support is unacceptable.

4. Recognising Abuse

Signs of abuse may include:

- Unexplained injuries or changes in behaviour
- Withdrawal, anxiety or fear
- Sudden changes in finances
- Poor hygiene or unmet health needs
- Changes in mood or confidence
- Reluctance to engage or speak openly

Staff and volunteers are trained to recognise concerns and act promptly.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

All Staff and Volunteers

- Remain vigilant to signs of abuse
- Take concerns seriously
- Record and report concerns immediately
- Follow Dragon Care's procedures
- Never promise confidentiality

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Holds responsibility for adult safeguarding
- Provides advice and support to staff
- Decides on referrals to statutory services
- Maintains secure safeguarding records
- Liaises with local authorities and partners
- Ensures training and compliance

Director of Operations

- Provides senior oversight
- Ensures organisational compliance
- Reviews safeguarding practice and learning
- Escalates high-risk concerns

6. Reporting a Concern

If you are worried about a person we support:

1. Ensure immediate safety if there is urgent risk.
2. Report the concern immediately to the DSL or Deputy.
3. Record the concern factually and promptly.
4. Do not investigate yourself.
5. Do not promise to keep secrets.

The DSL will decide on next steps, including whether a safeguarding referral is required.

7. Responding to Abuse

Dragon Care will:

- Listen and reassure
- Take concerns seriously
- Act promptly and proportionately
- Work in partnership with safeguarding teams
- Keep the person informed where appropriate
- Record actions and outcomes
- Use learning to improve practice

Where a crime may have occurred, the police will be contacted.

8. Mental Capacity and Consent

Dragon Care works in line with the Mental Capacity Act:

- Capacity is presumed unless proven otherwise
- People are supported to make their own decisions
- Information is provided in accessible formats
- Best-interest decisions are made where required
- Advocates are involved where appropriate

Safeguarding action will balance protection with respect for autonomy.

9. Safer Practice

Dragon Care reduces risk through:

- Safer recruitment
- Clear codes of conduct
- Staff training and supervision
- Risk assessments and support plans
- Safe environments and activities
- Open culture and whistleblowing

10. Recording and Confidentiality

- All safeguarding records are kept securely
- Information is shared on a need-to-know basis
- Records are factual, accurate and timely
- Data protection principles are followed

11. Review and Learning

This policy is reviewed annually. Safeguarding practice is monitored through:

- Audits
- Incident reviews
- Staff supervision
- Feedback from people we support
- Commissioner scrutiny

Learning is shared and embedded to continuously improve safety.

This policy reflects Dragon Care's commitment to dignity, safety and empowerment. We act early, listen carefully and work together to protect the people who trust us with their wellbeing.

Signed on behalf of Dragon Care

Role: Operations Director

Signature: *Hayley Ostler*

Date: 1st January 2026

Review Date: 1st January 2027