



Policy Title
DORSET SEARCH AND RESCUE (DorSAR) Safeguarding Policy

Policy Owner
Rebekka Welch – Designated Safeguarding Lead

Owning Dept
Members Representative & Members Secretary

Last Updated
June 2025

Next Review Date
1.0 June 2026

Reason for Policy
Safeguarding policy for all DorSAR personnel. This policy includes details of our training requirement

Objective of Policy
• To protect all people in the charity, or those it encounters, from harm, abuse, neglect or maltreatment of any kind. • To clearly define safeguarding responsibilities and expectations to prevent harm, abuse, neglect or maltreatment of any kind. • To ensure that DorSAR meets all legal and moral safeguarding requirements. • To clearly define the requirements of internal and external safeguarding reporting, responsibility and confidentiality.

Applicability

This policy is **applicable to all** volunteers, permanent and temporary employees, all associated persons such as contractors, consultants and others.

In addition, this policy will apply to any persons involved with work for or on behalf of the organisation in any setting including, partner agencies, students, and any other associated stakeholders.

Policy Introduction

DorSAR is the charity that saves lives from, 'Hill to High Water'.

Dorset Search and Rescue provides Search & Rescue support to the emergency services alongside Mountain Rescue, Cave Rescue, RNLI and others. Dorset Search and Rescue teams work 'From Hill to High Water' in over 30 counties of the UK and all of Northern Ireland. The Association of Lowland Search & Rescue is the coordinating body for individual Dorset Search and Rescue teams.

All members of DorSAR are volunteers; ordinary people doing extraordinary things; supported by expert volunteers, all working together as one team to help communities at home across England Wales and Ireland.

As a lifesaving charity and a community-based organisation, we believe in prioritising the safety and welfare of our people. We have a duty of care to our people, our supporters and those who we search for and rescue to protect them from harm.

Our people and the communities we exist to serve must be able to trust and depend on DorSAR to keep them and their families safe whenever they come into contact with our charity.

Policy

(1.0) Safeguarding at DorSAR

Safeguarding is about protecting all people; protecting a person's health, wellbeing, and human rights; and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse, and neglect.

Safeguarding is about duty of care – the moral or legal responsibility not to allow someone to be harmed. Therefore, safeguarding is defined in DorSAR as:

The range of measures in place to protect people in a charity, or those it meets, from abuse and maltreatment of any kind.

Everyone is responsible for safeguarding. It is our collective responsibility across all areas. If you are part of DorSAR, you are responsible for safeguarding.

We must all have an understanding of the types of harm that fall under safeguarding legalisation and guidance, champion ethical behaviours, know how and when to report concerns, and take every reasonable precaution to minimise risks.

We must do all we can to prevent harm in all its forms from occurring and address concerns with integrity, impartiality and proportionately.

We must be clear about what is acceptable or what is not acceptable, ensuring all employees, volunteers, communities, and those we work with are encouraged to speak out and challenge inappropriate behaviours or language, wherever they occur.

Trustees, Managers and other leaders are in a position of trust and authority. They play an important role in creating environments where people feel able to speak up and report concerns, and in supporting their teams to follow the safeguarding procedures in place.

(2.0) Responsibility

- We are all responsible for ensuring we are aware of and fully understand the contents of this policy.
- All members of DorSAR are responsible for ensuring this policy and guidance material is applied within their respective area and is shared with all personnel.

- Any queries on the application or interpretation of the policy and/or associated material must be discussed with the Safeguarding Lead prior to any action being taken.
- The Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring the maintenance, regular review and updating of this policy.

(3.0) Scope

This policy addresses all forms of safeguarding including (although not limited to):

- Verbal, physical, sexual, psychological, emotional and financial abuse
- Sexual harassment and child exploitation
- Criminal exploitation
- A culture which may allow poor behaviour and poor accountability
- People abusing a position of trust they hold
- Negligent treatment,
- Bullying (repetitive and consistent to cause harm)
- Harassment
- Stalking
- Intimidation
- Cyber abuse
- Prejudice / Discrimination / Hate Incidents¹
- Domestic abuse
- Coercion and control
- Self-neglect
- Extremism and radicalisation
- Forced marriage
- Modern slavery
- Human trafficking and female genital mutilation
- Substance misuse.

In some circumstances safeguarding matters identified may also be applicable to health and safety and data protection. Where these situations are identified communication will be made with the respective teams.

¹On any of the grounds in The Equality Act 2010, which include age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion or beliefs.

Safeguarding applies to all; however, there are specific regulations relating to child safeguarding and adult safeguarding practices.

(4.0) Our commitment

DorSAR will:

- Ensure the welfare and wellbeing of all is paramount, promoting a respectful, enabling, inclusive safe culture.
- Prevent, stop, and reduce the risk of harm, abuse, maltreatment, exploitation, and neglect wherever possible.
- Take all safeguarding concerns and allegations seriously; follow up on reports of safeguarding promptly and appropriately.
- Address concerns raised with integrity, impartiality and proportionately.
- Take appropriate action to prevent harm or abuse; we have a zero-tolerance approach. Meaning we will do all we can to prevent harm in all its forms from occurring and we will address concerns with integrity, impartiality and proportionately.
- Ensure those that raise concerns are supported and protected.
- Hold people and partners accountable for their actions or lack of action.
- Ensure all (regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious or other belief, sexual orientation or identity) have the right to protection from all types of harm, abuse and neglect.
- Work in partnership with the vulnerable person, their parents, carers and agencies to promote their welfare
- Provide support and training for everyone who may be in contact with young people and vulnerable adults during their duties.

(5.0) Prevention and protection

DorSAR will:

- Support all volunteers, and associated stakeholders to have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy.

- Offer suitable safeguarding training and support for DorSAR personnel; with an emphasis for those who may be in contact with young people and vulnerable adults during the course of their duties, which includes fundraising duties.
- Work in partnership with an individual at risk of harm, parents, carers and agencies to protect and promote their welfare and wellbeing.
- Design and undertake all its services and activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm, including the way in which information is gathered, stored, and communicated.
- Work with partners, contractors, service providers and stakeholders through our contractual and partnership arrangements to embed a positive safeguarding culture across DorSAR and its associated services and activity.
- Implement robust safeguarding procedures in the recruitment, management, and the deployment of all personnel.
- Ensure the compliance of all safeguarding legislation across DorSAR jurisdictions inclusive of the UK, Ireland and further afield if required.

Training requirement: DorSAR's Training requirement is to refresh on Safeguarding training three (3) yearly and to complete safeguarding children and adults training.

(6.0)

The 6 Rs of safeguarding (6.1)

Recognise:

- Recognise a safeguarding concern, including the different signs and symptoms of all safeguarding matters and what abuse, harm and neglect might be and look like.

(6.2) Respond:

- Respond appropriately to what you are being told.
- Listen carefully, do not judge, do not ignore, dismiss, minimise, or unduly influence the person reporting.

(6.3) Report

- Every safeguarding concern, allegation or incident **must** be reported at the point of receiving or witnessing the matter in accordance with the safeguarding reporting guidelines.

- You must act quickly, ensuring we stop or minimise any further harm or damage.
Confidentiality is paramount and you should only share information with those involved in the safeguarding process.
- Where concerns relating to DorSAR are identified in and out of hours, contact the DorSAR Safeguarding Lead, deputy or the lead trustee for safeguarding detailed at the end of this document. If all members are unavailable, please contact the relevant children's or adults social care team or if concerns are related to a member of DorSAR, the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO).
LADO details: 01305 221122 or LADO@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
If there is no immediate threat of harm, a record must be taken and report the matter to the Safeguarding Lead. Confidentiality is paramount; no personal details or the content of concerns to be included unless by not doing so would put the individual at further risk.
- If the safeguarding risk is significantly serious and there is a suspicion that somebody is immediate risk of harm or severe threat, you should contact the relevant statutory agency (such as the police).
- Please see section 7.0 for further information about statutory reporting and external agencies.

(6.4) Record

- You must record as many details as possible (who, what, why, when and where).
- You must ensure that you handle and record the matter in a secure and responsible way.

(6.5) Resolve

- Resolutions will be sought for all concerns and, in some cases, investigations and hearings will determine the appropriate outcome.
- All concerns raised should be followed up in a timely manner.
- Where a formal process is required, the Safeguarding Lead will work with the relevant people with The Service Assurance Team or other relevant members.
- Further proportionate action will be considered if an inadequate response has been provided and/or safeguarding advice has not been justly followed by the decision maker.

- You should take the advice and recommendations as provided by the Safeguarding Lead.
- If you decide to take alternative measures not in line with safeguarding advice or recommendations, you must detail your rational in writing along with your defendable decision to the Safeguarding Lead.

(6.6) Review

- The Safeguarding Lead will regularly review safeguarding reports and resolutions, enabling best practice and identifying lessons learnt to improve safeguarding practice.

(7.0) Statutory reporting and external agencies

The Safeguarding Lead will be the point of contact for external agencies on behalf of DorSAR on all safeguarding matters (unless otherwise directed).

The Safeguarding Lead **must** report all safeguarding matters which involve a child or young person to the relevant authorities, including the Local Authority Designated Officer and/or relevant children's social service, within 24-hours of the concern being raised. A similar approach will be taken with matters involving adults at risk.

Where matters reported are criminal in nature, the DorSAR Safeguarding Lead will report to all relevant external agencies in a timely manner and keep relevant members in DorSAR informed.

The Safeguarding Lead will consult with statutory agencies before beginning any internal investigations. In some cases, a statutory agency may initiate enquiries before putting the concerns or allegations to the individual. It is vital that DorSAR does not instigate any process which may inadvertently impede a police or statutory investigation.

Should DorSAR decide to cease the membership or volunteer agreement of an individual on safeguarding grounds, referrals into the jurisdictional vetting bureaus (e.g., NPPV, Disclosure Barring Service) and any other relevant professional bodies will be made.

All persons referred to within this policy and/or procedures are required to be familiar with their role.

Any queries on the application or interpretation of policy and/or procedure must be discussed with the Service Assurance & Support Team prior to any action being taken.

The Service Assurance & Support Team has the responsibility for ensuring the maintenance, regular review and updating of this policy.

(8.0) Confidentiality

Confidentiality is paramount in dealing with safeguarding concerns, therefore limiting the number of people who are aware of the concern.

- If it is decided that someone needs to know about a safeguarding concern, then considerations will be given to the level of information disclosed.
- Where it is applicable and proportionate to do so, information sharing is essential for the effective safeguarding of adults and children in order to make decisions to protect individuals.

Sharing information is an important part of safeguarding. If the information is confidential, but there is a safeguarding concern, sharing information is allowed both within and between organisations.

The law recognises that sharing information is an essential part of safeguarding and this is covered in a range of laws including:

- The Common Law Duty of Confidentiality
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Care Act 2014
- Working together to keep children safe statutory guidance.

During safeguarding investigations some information such as statements and the contents within the statements may be classified as legally privileged and will therefore only be disclosed to DorSAR's Safeguarding Lead and relevant members of The Service Assurance Team, and (where applicable) statutory external agencies and investigation and hearing managers.

(9.0) Designated Responsible Roles

Charity trustees:

- Safeguarding is a key governance priority for trustees. It is part of their duty of care. As trustees of DorSAR, they are responsible for ensuring those benefiting from or working with DorSAR are not harmed in any way through any contact with it.
- DorSAR trustees are ultimately accountable for ensuring the organisation and its representatives uphold its safeguarding requirements and commitments and create and embed a robust safeguarding culture across all departments, and that safeguarding is considered in all strategic decision making.
- DorSAR trustees play an essential role in setting the safeguarding aims and objectives, devising strategy and holding senior leaders to account for their effective implementations.

Designated Safeguarding Trustee:

- DorSAR trustees will appoint a Designated Safeguarding Trustee with relevant experience and training in safeguarding to support the charity in embedding safeguarding practice and ensure regulatory compliance.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- The DSL has a direct role in ensuring the organisation appropriately exercises its safeguarding duties across all safeguarding matters; with specific reference to matters where there are children and vulnerable adults ensuring its functions follow statutory arrangements and guidance.
- Where the DSL identifies a significant risk because of non-adherence to the policy, the matter will be escalated to the relevant senior leader or executive lead and if substantial to DorSAR, the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Lead Trustee.
- The DSL role will act as the main source of support, advice, and expertise for safeguarding. It has a responsibility for dealing with safeguarding concerns and allegations; responsible for the oversight and management of all safeguarding concerns, allegations or incidents reported as well as managing referrals to external safeguarding agencies.

- The DSL is responsible for updating policies and procedures to reflect changes in statutory requirements, good practice, lessons learnt and current issues.

Trustees:

- Play a critical role in ensuring safeguarding is embedded across departments and is considered in all decision making.
- They will promote a fair, open and positive culture and ensure that all involved feel able to report concerns, confident that they will be heard and responded to.
- They must ensure DorSAR works within all relevant statutory guidance, keeps accurate records, stays aware of current affairs, trends and themes and how policies and practices can be influenced and complies with its policies and procedures.
- DorSAR will have a named trustee for safeguarding

All DORSET SEARCH AND RESCUE personnel:

- All personnel have a responsibility to report any safeguarding concern and act accordingly in line with safeguarding advice.

If you see it, hear it, have been told it, or something doesn't feel right; report it!

#TED:Tellmeexplaindescribe

Definitions

- The term **child/young person** has the specific legal meaning of anyone below the age of 18 years.
- A **vulnerable adult** is someone who has care and support needs, and/or is experiencing or is at risk of harm, abuse or neglect and is unable to protect themselves.

Resources

- Safeguarding Reporting Guidance
- Safeguarding Under 18's
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

Reference Documents

- The Equality Act 2010
- The Common Law Duty of Confidentiality
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Human Rights Act 19
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Care Act 2014
- Working together to keep children safe statutory guidance
- Safeguarding and Protecting People for Charities and Trustees
- Making barring referrals to the Disclosure Barring Service (equivalent Protecting Vulnerable Groups, Access NI, Garda National Vetting Bureau)

Related Policies, Procedures & Guidance

- Volunteer Code of Conduct
- Volunteer H&S Policy
- Volunteer Dealing with Problems/ Whistleblowing Policy
- Volunteer Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Volunteer Data Protection Policy
- Volunteer Medical Policy

Contact Details

Dorset Search and Rescue's Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Deputy

Name: Martin Adams

Email: safeguarding@dorsar.org.uk

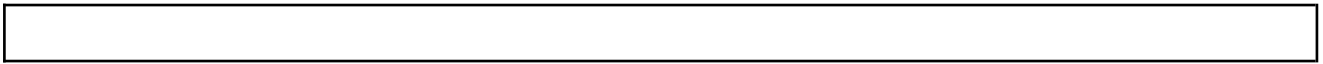
DorSAR Named Trustee for Safeguarding and National Safeguarding Lead for Lowland Rescue:

Name: Rebekka Welch

Email: unit-leader@dorsar.org.uk / rebekka.welch@lowlandrescue.org

Telephone: 07749775111

NSPCC Helpline 0808 800 5000



End of document