

PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS POLICY

Introduction

1. The Dornoch & District Community Association (DADCA) has adopted this statement of policy in its work with vulnerable groups. The Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) legislation provides for the protection of two vulnerable groups: children and protected adults. It defines a child as an individual less than 18 years of age and a protected adult as an individual aged 16 or over who is provided with a type of care, support or welfare service. The aim of the policy is to protect vulnerable groups from abuse and to a lesser extent DADCA staff and helpers from failing to follow guidelines.

Policy Statement

2. The needs and rights of vulnerable persons take priority. It is the duty of all DADCA volunteers to safeguard, to the best of their ability, the welfare of and prevent the assault, physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect of vulnerable persons with whom they come into contact during their duties.

Outline Operation

3. DADCA will endeavour to ensure safeguarding by:
 - a) Actively encouraging a climate through which protection issues are regarded as an essential part of all activities and events.
 - b) Adopting protection guidelines through procedures and a code of practice for all DADCA staff, other helpers and volunteers associated with DADCA. A code of practice is attached as Annex A.
 - c) Planning all events and activities so that protection issues are properly addressed.
 - d) Following the agreed guidelines on how to deal with the disclosure or discovery of abuse and sharing information about concerns with agencies that need to know. A reporting form is at Annex B.
 - e) Offering appropriate guidance for volunteers associated with DADCA, in the processes and procedures of child and vulnerable adult protection.
 - f) Following carefully the procedures for the recruitment and selection of volunteers associated with DADCA to assist with projects and activities.
 - g) Monitoring and reviewing this policy and the associated procedures on a regular basis. This review will be completed annually.

DADCA Protection Officer

4. The Protection Officer is the Chair or his/her appointee, who should be consulted on any matters regarding protection issues.

Forms of Abuse

5. Whilst abuse can manifest in many forms the following are the main types that DADCA volunteers are to be alert to:
 - a) Emotional abuse
 - b) Neglect
 - c) Physical and sexual abuse
 - d) Financial abuse
 - e) Discrimination and bullying

Reporting Abuse

6. Annex B provides detailed guidance on dealing with complaints, accusations and reports of abuse. The form at Annex B should be used by any DADCA staff who suspects or receives information relating to the abuse of a child or vulnerable adult.

DADCA Activities

7. Whilst DADCA is involved in a diverse range of activities throughout the year the following require specific consideration be given to protection issues.
 - a) Youth Café
 - b) Festival Week
 - c) Dornoch Cinema

Hire of the Social Club

8. Whilst DADCA has responsibility for its own activities, it cannot be held responsible for the activities of groups to whom it hires the Social Club. The protection of vulnerable groups by any hirer of the Social Club is the responsibility of the hirer. However hirers dealing with vulnerable groups must lodge a copy of their vulnerable groups protection policy with the bookings secretary before a booking can be accepted.

Annex A : Code of Practice

DADCA staff and Volunteers should always:

- Treat children/vulnerable people with respect.
- Provide a model of good and appropriate behaviour.
- Respect a person's right to privacy.
- Be aware that behaviour can be misinterpreted, even when well-intentioned.
- Challenge any unacceptable behaviour.
- Operate within agreed guidelines.

DADCA staff and Volunteers should never:

- Engage in rough physical games or horseplay.
- Engage in or encourage sexually provocative games or activities.
- Allow or engage in inappropriate touching of any kind.
- Allow the vulnerable to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- Make any sexually suggestive comments even 'in fun'.
- Let any allegations go unrecorded.
- Rely on 'my good name' as protection.
- Do things of a personal nature for the vulnerable that they can do for themselves.
- Allow bullying to go unchecked.

What to do if a child or vulnerable person discloses to you abuse by another person:

- Do not panic.
- Allow the person to speak uninterrupted, accept what is said, but do not investigate.
- Alleviate feelings of guilt or isolation and do not pass judgement.
- Let the person know that you are glad they have shared the information.
- Advise that person that you **MUST** report the information, then do so.
- Avoid making any promises.
- Avoid attempting to deal with the problem alone.

If you suspect a child/vulnerable person is being abused you must report the matter to the person in charge immediately.

If you receive an allegation about any other adult, or yourself, you must immediately tell the person in charge and try to ensure that no-one is placed in a position which could cause further compromise.

In all cases record the facts and report them to the person in charge. You must refer on; DO NOT investigate.

General advice

Organisers should consider the following precautions:

- Do not spend excessive time alone with the vulnerable away from others.
- Do not show favouritism towards an individual.
- Do not take the individual alone on car journeys, however short.
- Do not meet the vulnerable outside organised activities unless it is with the knowledge and consent of the parent/carer/responsible person AND of the person in charge of the activity or other responsible person.

Annex B : Referral Form for Suspicions or Allegations of abuse of a Child or Vulnerable Adult.

This form must be completed as soon as possible after receiving information that causes suspicion or an allegation of the abuse of a child or vulnerable adult. This must be discussed with DADCA Protection Officer and then with the appropriate agency as soon as possible after completion. Do not delay by attempting to obtain information to complete the details.

Note: Confidentiality must be maintained at all times. Information must only be shared on a need to know basis i.e. only if it will protect the child. Do not discuss this incident with anyone other than those who need to know. Continue on a separate sheet of paper if required and attach securely to this form.

1 - Details of person making this report	
Name :	
Tel. No.	Position

2 - Details of Child or Vulnerable Adult		
Name	D.O.B.	Tel.
Address		
Name of Parent/Guardian/Carer		
Address		

3 - Details of Person about whom there is concern		
Name	D.O.B.	Position
Address		
Relationship to Child / Vulnerable Adult		

4 – Details of person making allegation (if not reporter)	
Name	Position
Tel. No.	Date of Advice from other person

5 – Details of alleged incident		
Date	Time	Place
Describe in detail what happened		
If applicable, describe in detail any injuries, bruises and/or behaviour of concern		
List the contact details of any witnesses		
Was the child / vulnerable adult asked about what happened?		YES / NO
If YES, record exactly what the person said :		

6 - Details of action taken	
Detail what action, if any, has been taken following receipt of this information:	
<i>(Only after seeking advice from the Police / Social Work department)</i> Was the child's / vulnerable adults' parent/carer/guardian contacted?	YES / NO

7 - Details of external agencies contacted	
Police Station contacted	
Name and contact number	
Advice received	
Social Work Dept contacted	
Name and contact number	
Advice received	
Other organisation contacted	
Name and contact number	
Advice received	

8 - Other information

Signature Date

Print Name:

Where a referral has been made to the Police and Social Work Department a copy of this form must be sent to them as soon as possible.