



Down's Syndrome Scotland Online Safeguarding Policy

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1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 Down's Syndrome Scotland (DSS) provides online services, events and activities for children, adults at risk and their families, carers, and suitable representatives.
- 1.2 The Purpose of this policy is to:
- ensure that the safety and wellbeing of children and adults at risk is paramount when adults or children are using the internet, social media or mobile devices as part of their involvement with us.
 - provide staff and volunteers with the overarching principles that guide our approach to online safety
 - ensure that, as an organisation, we operate in line with our values and within the law in terms of how we use online devices
 - To encourage the continual improvement of the health, safety and wellbeing of all volunteers and employees who work with us, those using our services and anyone else affected by what we do.
 - To ensure everyone is aware of their health and safety responsibilities so they take reasonable steps to ensure their own health and safety, and that of others.
 - To promote active co-operation between trustees, management, employees and volunteers to create the safe environment that we all deserve.
- 1.3 This policy and procedures that it underpins apply to all staff, including senior managers and the board of trustees, paid staff, volunteers, and sessional workers, agency staff and anyone working on behalf of DSS.

2. Keeping Children and Adults at Risk Safe Online

- 2.1 We believe that:
- Children and adults at risk should never experience abuse of any kind
 - Children and adults at risk should be able to use the internet for education and personal development, but safeguards need to be in place to ensure they are always kept safe.
- 2.2 We recognise that:
- The online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however, it can also present risks and challenges in terms of how we use it responsibly and, if misused by either a child or an adult at risk can be potentially harmful to them.
 - We have a duty to ensure all children and adults involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online
 - We have a responsibility to help keep children and adults at risk safe online, whether they are using DSS's network and devices or not.
 - All children and adults at risk, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
 - Working in partnership with children, adults at risk, their parents, carers, suitable representatives and other agencies is essential in promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk and in helping children and adults at risk to be responsible in their approach to online safety.

2.3 We seek to keep children and adults at risk safe online by:

- appointing a designated protection officer to oversee online safety
- providing clear and specific directions to staff and volunteers on how to behave online through our Code of Conduct and Guidelines for Safe Working with Children and Adults at Risk
- supporting and encouraging children and adults at risk who use our services to use the internet, social media and mobile phones in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others
- supporting and encouraging parents, carers and suitable representatives to what they can to keep their child/adult at risk safe online.
- developing an online safety agreement for use with children and adults at risk and their parents/carers/suitable representatives
- developing clear and robust procedures to enable us to respond appropriately to any incidents of inappropriate online behaviour, whether by an adult or a child.
- reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly
- ensuring that user names, logins, email accounts and passwords are used effectively
- ensuring personal information about children and adults who are involved in our organisation is held securely and shared only as appropriate
- ensuring that images of children, adults at risk and families are used only for which consent has been given
- providing supervision, support and training for staff and volunteers about online safety
- examining and risk assessing any social media platforms and new technologies before they are used within the organisation
- providing training

3. Online Safeguarding Policy (Staff)

- 3.1 DSS staff should only use DSS email addresses, official social media channels and licenced video conferencing platforms that have been authorised for staff use. It is not permissible to use other platforms without prior discussion and agreement with senior management.
- 3.2 DSS staff will only communicate with participants using their DSS email address and to the agreed principal email address which has been previously agreed with a participant or parent/carer.
- 3.3 Under no circumstances should DSS staff or participants personal contact details be shared.
- 3.4 Private chat or sharing of images between participants and DSS staff is unacceptable unless in relation to agreement to specifically support promotion of services or funding reports
- 3.5 DSS staff will not engage in online discussions on personal matters and maintain professional boundaries at all times.
- 3.6 DSS staff must use the online profile/platform recommended for sessions or events only and not for any other social interactions

- 3.7 DSS staff must keep their professional profile separate from any personal profiles. They must not share any personal information about themselves with service users or members.
- 3.8 DSS staff should present themselves professionally at all times.
- 3.9 A suitable learning environment should be created in a safe working space, appropriate for online learning and DSS staff should limit distractions as much as possible.
- 3.10 For participants aged 16 and under their parent/carer or nominated person of support should be the 'principal email address' and support the set-up of online sessions before and during delivery taking place. The parent/carer or nominated support person should confirm that they are present and happy for the session to proceed.
- 3.11 Once a session has started, the parent/carer or nominated support person for a child under 16 should remain close by and available to provide support if needed and for the staff member to speak to them if required.
- 3.12 At the end of the session DSS staff will make participants aware that the session is coming to a close and for participants 16 and under, a parent/carer or nominated support person should be informed before signing off.
- 3.13 DSS staff must report any concerns to Head of Service Development. If the concern is in relation to a suspected Child or Adult at Risk protection issue, the staff member should report online safety incidents in the same way as any Child or Adult at Risk protection incident and report in accordance with DSS Child and Adults at Risk Protection Policy and Procedures.

4. Online Safeguarding Policy (Participants and parents/carers and nominated Support persons)

- 4.1 Participants, parents, and carers and nominated support persons are assured that DSS applies equal importance to safeguarding during online sessions as it does in face-to-face sessions, and activities and events and all aspect of DSS Child Protection and Adult Support and Support and Protection Policy and Procedure applies
- 4.2 DSS staff and participants must only engage in 'Live' group sessions using a licensed video conferencing platform that has been authorised for use.
- 4.3 Links for any live events will be sent to the principal email address agreed with the participant or their parent/carer or nominated support person in advance. The link, meeting ID or password should not be passed on to anyone else.
- 4.4 DSS staff will only undertake communications with participants or their parents/carer or nominated support person from their DSS email address to the principal email address that has been agreed with the participant or their parent/carer or nominated support person.
- 4.5 For participants under 16 years or under, their parent/carer or nominated support

person should be the principal email address and support with the set up of online sessions before and during delivery taking place.

- 4.6 The parent/carer or nominated support person should confirm that they are present and are happy for the session to proceed
- 4.7 Once a session has started, the parent/carer or nominated support person for participants aged 16 and under should remain close by and available to provide support if needed and for the staff member to speak to them if required.
- 4.8 Participants are required to be dressed appropriately for online sessions and events. Attire which would normally be worn when attending DSS face to face sessions and events is required. Any attire that does not meet this expectation is not acceptable and sessions should be stopped immediately and reported to the relevant manager.
- 4.9 A suitable environment should be created which is appropriate for online attendance and events and participants, parents/carers and nominated support persons should ensure that nothing personal or inappropriate can be seen or heard in the background wherever possible.
- 4.10 At the end of each session DSS staff will make participants aware that the session is coming to a close and will sign off with parents/carers or nominated support persons of participants aged 16 and under before ending the session.
- 4.11 Participants and parents/carers and nominated support persons must respect that the online platform for the session is to be used for the session only and not for other contact such as sharing photographs or general messaging.
- 4.12 Participants and parents/carers and nominated support persons must report any issues as soon as possible to the DSS staff member leading the session. If the issue is in relation to that staff member, issues should be reported to DSS Head of Service Development whose details are available from our website.

5. Recording of Sessions and Events

- 5.1 Sessions and events may be recorded for monitoring and evaluation. We may use screenshots or clips from the session to tell people about the work we do on social media like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter and share this information with trust and grant providers in reports for funding we receive. We will not do this without your permission
- 5.2 If a session or event is going to be recorded participants will be informed of this and have the right to object
- 5.3 For anyone aged 16 and under, a parent/carer or nominated support person has the right to object
- 5.4 If an objection is noted the session will not be recorded.

6. Responding to Online Abuse

If online abuse occurs, we will respond to it by:

- having clear and robust safeguarding procedures in place for responding to abuse (including online abuse)
- providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of abuse, including bullying/cyberbullying, emotional abuse, sexting, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation.
- making sure our response takes the needs of the person experiencing abuse, any bystanders and our organisation as a whole into account
- reviewing the plan developed to address online abuse at regular intervals, in order to ensure that any problems have been resolved in the long term

7. Health and Safety Online

Participants should:

- Ensure the area they are working is safe and clear from obstructions
- Take breaks from screens – at least 5-10 minutes every hour
- Keep hydrated drinking water regularly
- Ensure the lighting in the room is suitable for the activity
- If possible, use a space that has a window that opens for ventilation
- Try to keep the temperature at a comfortable level but if you feel tired or too tired or too hot take a break
- If sitting at a computer for several hours try to ensure a good workstation setup

Attending sessions and working online may be more tiring for some people so rest breaks and moving regularly is recommended.

8. Related Policies and Procedures

This policy should be read alongside DSS's policies and procedures, including:

- Child Protection
- Adult Support and Protection
- Procedures for responding to concerns about a child or adult at risk
- Dealing with allegations made against a child or adult at risk
- Managing allegations against staff and volunteers
- Code of Conduct for staff and volunteers
- Antbullying policy and procedures
- Photography and image sharing guidance
- Guidelines for sharing confidential information
- Guidelines for safe working with Children and Adults at risk
- Volunteer Code of Practice
- Disclosure policy and procedure
- Complaints
- Disciplinary action
- Whistleblowing

9. Legal Framework

This policy has been created based on legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect children and adults at risk in Scotland. Summaries of the key legislation and guidance are available on:

- Online abuse: learning/nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse
- Bullying: learning/nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying
- Child Protection: learning/nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system/Scotland
- Scottish Government 2010 Action Plan on Child Internet Safety and the 2011/12 Scottish Action Plan on Child Internet Safety and Responsible Use.
- Police Scotland [/keep-safe/young-people/supporting-children-and-young-people/keep-your-child-safe-online](https://www.psd.scot.nhs.uk/keep-safe/young-people/supporting-children-and-young-people/keep-your-child-safe-online)
- Adult Support and Protection: Scottish Government

10. Status and Review

Online Safety Policy	
Person responsible for Policy and Procedures	Designated Protection Officer
Date completed:	December 2020
Updated	January 2021
Next review date	January 2022