

Safeguarding Policy

This policy should be read together with our parent body's [safeguarding policy](#). In the event of any conflict, the parent body's safeguarding policy takes precedence and must always be followed.

Safeguarding lead

The Safeguarding lead for Durham Nightline is:

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Deputy Director of Services

They can be contacted on:

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Definitions

Safeguarding means protecting people's health, wellbeing, and rights. Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility. While it is important to safeguard everyone, there are particular responsibilities regarding children and adults at risk, due to the fact that they are more vulnerable to abuse.

A **child** is anyone under the age of 18.¹

An **adult at risk**² is anyone over the age of 18 who:

- has needs for care and support,
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- as a result of those needs is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Abuse

Forms of Abuse

- Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts
- It may occur as a result of a failure to undertake action or appropriate care tasks
- It may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur where a person at risk is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which they have not, or cannot, consent
- It may be deliberate or unintentional or result from a lack of knowledge
- It may cause harm temporarily or over a period of time

¹ Children Act 1989, s 105.

² Care Act 2014, s 42.

- Abuse can be perpetrated by anyone, carried out by individuals or as part of a group or an organisation
- Abuse can constitute a crime
- Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the individual
- Abuse can be self-inflicted (such as deliberate self-harm)

Categories of Abuse

There are four main categories of abuse which are:

- **Physical abuse**

Causing any physical impact or injury, such as:

- Hitting, slapping, punching, kicking, hair-pulling, biting, pushing
- Rough handling
- Scalding and burning
- Physical punishments
- Inappropriate use of restraint
- Physical harm caused by a parent/carer inducing or fabricating the symptoms of an illness

- **Emotional abuse**

Persistent mistreatment of someone. Some level of emotional abuse will be present in all types of abuse, although it may also appear alone. Examples include:

- Overprotection - preventing someone from accessing educational and social opportunities, and seeing friends
- Intimidation, coercion, harassment, use of threats, humiliation, bullying, swearing, or verbal abuse
- Conveying feelings of worthlessness, inadequacy, or that someone is unloved
- Threats of harm or abandonment
- Placing inappropriate expectations on someone
- Witnessing or hearing the abuse or ill-treatment of others

- **Sexual abuse**

Forcing or coercing a person to take part in sexual activities such as:

- Penetrative sex, including oral and anal sex
- Non-penetrative acts including kissing, masturbation, rubbing, or inappropriate touching
- Forced viewing or creation of sexual photography / pornography
- Forced witnessing of sexual acts
- Grooming in preparation for abuse
- Any sexual act between an adult and a child under 16
- Any sexual act between an adult in a position of trust / responsibility and a child under 18 / adult at risk

*In the context of adults, it should be recognised that some consensual sexual activities may include some level of agreed violence, restraint, or other actions that would otherwise be viewed as abuse (BDSM - Bondage, Discipline, Domination, Submission, Sadism, Masochism). These activities will be fully consensual, with agreed-upon "safe words" or ways of ending the activity by any party at any time. **BDSM requires full ongoing and informed consent from all parties. If this is not present then the activity is abuse.***

- **Neglect**

A persistent failure to meet the basic needs (physical or emotional) of a child or adult at risk in a person's care. This includes:

- Failing to provide adequate shelter, clothing, or food
- Failing to protect someone from harm or danger
- Failing to ensure adequate supervision for someone
- Failing to access medical care or treatment for someone where needed

However, it is important to be aware of more specific types of abuse that fall within these categories such as:

- **Financial abuse**

Theft, fraud, scams, or controlling/coercive behaviour in relation to a person's financial arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance, or financial transactions.

- **Self-neglect and self-harm**

Neglecting to care for one's own needs and/or inflicting deliberate harm upon oneself

- **Domestic abuse**

Psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional, or other abuse perpetrated by someone within a person's family.

"**Mate crime**" is a similar situation but where the abuser is a "friend" rather than a family member.

- **Discrimination**

Abuse that centres on a difference or perceived difference, particularly with respect to a protected characteristic (age, gender reassignment, marital/civil partnership status, pregnancy/maternity, disability, race/nationality/ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation).³

- **Online abuse**

Cyber-bullying, online harassment, or other abuse perpetrated over the internet.

- **Radicalisation**

Attempts to embed extreme views, inspire recruits, and persuade individuals of the legitimacy of an extremist cause.

³ Equality Act 2010, s 4.

Purpose of this Policy

In line with current law and guidance, Durham Nightline will act to protect children and adults at risk from abuse.

Durham Nightline is committed to a safeguarding practice that reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance, and complies with best practice recommendations.

This policy applies to everyone involved in Durham Nightline.

Durham Nightline ensures an appropriate induction and level of training are available and failure to comply with the policy and related procedures will be immediately addressed and could ultimately result in dismissal/exclusion from Nightline.

This policy, and associated procedures, will make clear how to:

- Protect people from harm and recognise that our responsibilities cover both children and adults at risk
- Provide the overarching principles that guide our approach to safeguarding and child protection
- Make sure people can raise safeguarding concerns with clear practice pathways in place
- Handle and manage allegations or incidents
- Report to the relevant authorities depending on presentation of risk

Scope

This policy applies to everyone in Durham Nightline, no matter their role.

Policy statement

Nightline is committed to ensure that we safeguard children and adults at risk, including both those using our service, and those providing our service.

This policy statement should be read alongside the following policies and procedures:

- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Volunteer Agreement
- Handling Caller Safeguarding Disclosures Procedure
- Child Callers Procedure
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Suicide Policy & Procedures

Nightline is not an independent organisation, but is a service run by the parent body. The following matters are dealt with by the parent body, and their policies & procedures should be followed and will, where necessary, supersede any Durham Nightline policies relating to the same matters:

- Allegations against staff and volunteers
- Complaints & Grievances
- Data Protection Policy & Procedures
- Confidentiality and Information Sharing Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

All those involved with Nightline in any capacity are responsible for implementing this policy, and promoting the welfare and safety of children and adults at risk.

The **parent body** is responsible for:

- Approving this policy
- Overseeing and quality assuring this policy's implementation
- Satisfying itself that all those involved in Nightline have received adequate safeguarding training for their roles
- Liaising with local authorities, the police, and other partners to safeguarding children and adults at risk
- Reporting serious incidents to the Charity Commission.

The **Coordinator(s)** is/are responsible for:

- Ensuring that adequate safeguarding training is delivered to those involved in Nightline
- Regularly reminding all those involved in Nightline of their safeguarding responsibilities
- Reporting safeguarding incidents to the Nightline Association

All **volunteers** are responsible for:

- Ensuring that they are familiar with Nightline's safeguarding policies and procedures
- Taking action to promote and protect the welfare of children and adults at risk

Training

Training for listening volunteers

All of our listening volunteers receive detailed safeguarding training as part of their initial volunteer training. Volunteers are not able to take a shift until they have completed this training and demonstrated that they understand it.

The safeguarding training covers:

- What safeguarding is
- The definitions of children and adults at risk
- Identifying when an adult may be an adult of risk
- Responsibilities under the Safeguarding Policy
- Recognising types and signs of abuse
- How and when to report concerns relating to service users and other volunteers
- How to react to a direct disclosure
- Handling calls containing details of abuse
- When and how to whistleblow to the Nightline Association, parent body, or authorities

All active listening volunteers are required to undertake a safeguarding training refresher every year.

Training for Committee members and/or Nightleads

Members of the Committee and Nightleads receive additional training to help them ensure that safeguarding arrangements within Nightline are being implemented properly, and so that they can respond to any queries from volunteers.

This training covers:

- All content required for listening volunteers (see above)
- The role of the Safeguarding Lead
- Which safeguarding incidents/concerns to report to the Nightline Association, and how
- Protecting volunteers who may be adults at risk
- Implementing Safer Recruitment practices
- Handling allegations or issues involving volunteers

This training is delivered by the Nightline Association and should be completed as soon as possible after appointment. Committee members renew this training annually.

Safeguarding our Service Users

Children

See the Child Callers Procedure for the procedure for handling calls from children.

The Nightline service is not designed for callers under the age of 18. There are other services which are better able to support and meet the needs of children, such as Childline. Our publicity will make clear that our service is only intended for over 18s, with the understanding that some Durham

University students are under 18 years of age and the Child Callers Procedure will be applied if the volunteer is made aware of this during the call.

Childline is a service run by the NSPCC that offers a similar service to Nightline but aimed at children. Childline can be contacted 24/7 by:

- Calling 0800 1111 or 116 111
- Using the online 1-2-1 chat (requires anonymous login)
- Sending an email message (requires anonymous login)

For more information, see www.childline.org.uk/get-support/contacting-childline

Where a child uses the Nightline service, we will do our best to support them as we would any other service user, but we will signpost them to Childline at regular intervals.

If a child discloses that they are being abused or are at risk of abuse, we will report this to the Safeguarding Lead. If they are in imminent danger, we will contact the emergency services.

Adults with concerns about a child can report this to the [NSPCC](http://www.nspcc.org.uk).

Adults at Risk

Where it appears that a service user may be an adult at risk, and they disclose that they are being abused, or are at risk of abuse, we will report this to the Safeguarding Lead. If they are in imminent danger, we will contact the emergency services.

We do not operate a policy of assuming that all callers are adults at risk. However, we will err on the side of caution in the event of any ambiguity.

Safeguarding our Volunteers

Children

Nightline does not recruit volunteers under the age of 18 due to the nature of the work involved.

Adults at Risk

Being a Nightline volunteer naturally means handling difficult situations, including distressing and abusive calls. We also recognise that many people wish to volunteer with Nightline because they have current or previous experience of mental health challenges.

We always put our volunteers first, and ensure that their welfare is protected.

Steps we take include:

- Providing details of support made available by the Nightline Association for all UK Nightline volunteers.
- Implementing Safer Recruitment practices to ensure that all volunteers are suitable for their roles, and that volunteering will not put them at risk of harm.
- Having robust volunteer welfare structures in place to support volunteers.
- Making sure that all of our volunteers are properly trained to carry out their roles.
- Promoting a culture where volunteers feel empowered and able to say no if they are not physically or mentally well enough to be on shift, including taking breaks during shifts.
- Ensuring that volunteers do not do more than:
 - One duty shift in any 5-day period (with a longer period following particularly difficult calls such as those relating to suicide), with a recommended gap of 7 days between shifts.
 - One reserve in any 2-day period, or two reserves in any 5-day period, and will not reserve in any of the 4 nights following a duty shift, reserve the night prior to a duty or nightlead shift, or reserve the night following a nightlead shift. If a reserve is called into the office, the shift will be treated as a duty and the volunteer will not do any shifts in the following 5-day period.
 - One nightlead shift in any 2-day period, and will not nightlead in any of the 4 nights following a duty shift, nightlead the night prior to a duty or reserve shift, or nightlead the night following a reserve shift.
- Allowing volunteers to pause contacts during a shift following a difficult call (with a requirement to pause following particularly difficult calls such as those relating to suicide or abusive calls).
- Having clear policies and procedures for handling abuses of the services, including a zero-tolerance policy for abuse towards our volunteers.

Safeguarding Others

Sometimes, we may become aware of a risk of harm to a child or adult at risk that is not a service user or volunteer. For example, they may be a relative or friend of a service user or volunteer.

In these cases, we will report the details that we know so that the child or adult at risk can be protected from harm.

Reviews and amendments

This policy is reviewed at least annually in line with best practice guidance from the Nightline Association.

All changes are approved by Nightline's parent body.

Legal Framework

This policy is based on the legal framework which underpins safeguarding in England. This includes, but is not limited to:

General

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010

Child Safeguarding

- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (statutory guidance)

Adult Safeguarding

- Care Act 2014 and associated statutory guidance
- Care and support statutory guidance

Mental Capacity

- Mental Capacity Act 2005

Sexual Offences

- Sexual Offences Act 2003

Data Protection

- UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018