

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Disabled Ramblers Policy and Guidance

Reviewed & revised 29th October 2015

1. Policy Statement

Read this to find out about the Disabled Ramblers' general policy on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

2. Guidance for the Public and Disabled Ramblers members

Read this if you are a child, young person or vulnerable adult planning to attend a Disabled Ramblers ramble or other activity, or if you are a parent, guardian or carer.

3. Guidance for Disabled Ramblers Volunteers

Read this if you run or help to run activities for the Disabled Ramblers

1. Policy statement

The Disabled Ramblers provides rambling activities for its members and the public. These rambles may sometimes include children and young people under the age of 18, and adults who may be particularly vulnerable.

We are committed to ensuring the well-being of everyone who participates in Disabled Ramblers' activities and will take every practical step to minimise the risk of harm, paying particular attention to the needs of those who are most vulnerable, including children and vulnerable adults.

We are also committed to supporting fully our volunteers in their work to deliver our charitable aims and strategic objectives, including protecting them from potential liabilities and false suspicions and allegations of abuse.

1.1 Who are children and vulnerable adults?

In this document, a **child** is anyone aged 0-18 years old, as defined by relevant child protection legislation in England, Scotland and Wales.

Note that although Scotland has some age limits which are historically different from those in England and Wales, the Scottish Government's guidance is that for child protection purposes, a child is someone under the age of 18.

A **vulnerable adult** is someone of 18 years or older who is unable to care independently for themselves.

This might include people who:

- have a physical disability, illness or injury, or have become severely frail, though old age.

- are experiencing mental health issues including dementia, or have learning disabilities.
- are in need of community care.
- are unable to protect themselves from harm, through domestic violence or substance addiction.

1.2 Welcoming children and vulnerable adults

The Disabled Ramblers works to make rambling accessible to all, and share its benefits with as wide a range of people as possible, including children and vulnerable adults. We welcome children and vulnerable adults on all activities that are suitable for them as individuals. We are committed to equal opportunities and aim to treat everyone with dignity and respect, and not to discriminate on grounds of age, ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, disability or beliefs.

However, while we are the experts at providing and supporting rambling activities, we are not able to provide specialist care and support for people who have special needs or who are unable to care independently for themselves, or to take special responsibility for looking after children and young people under the age of 18.

1 We can only accept children under the age of 18 on activities when they are accompanied by a parent, legal guardian or other person with equivalent responsibility for them such as a teacher or youth worker.

2 We can only welcome adults in need of special care when they are accompanied throughout the ramble by a carer or support worker to assist with their everyday needs. While the person with special needs should be a member, we do not expect their carer or support worker to be a member too. This person must be a walker, not a scooter user.

3 Participation in all activities is subject to their suitability for individual participants. Ramble leaders and other activity organisers have an enhanced duty of care towards participants, and sometimes need to make judgements that take into account the safety and enjoyment of everyone involved in an activity. They have a right to refuse a participant if in the leader's opinion this would result in danger to the individual or danger or major disruption to the rest of the group. We will strive to make such judgements on a fair and practical basis and without making stereotypical or unwarranted assumptions.

1.3 Who is responsible?

Everyone helping the Disabled Ramblers run its activities is responsible for providing children and vulnerable adults with appropriate safety and protection. This includes:

- 1 Volunteers (Volunteers are all people who run, or help to run rambles or other activities for the Disabled Ramblers.)
- 2 Trustees, who are expected to ensure the Disabled Ramblers complies with the law and that Disabled Ramblers policies and objectives are implemented as effectively as possible.

1.4 What we will do

We will take all reasonable measures to protect the welfare of children and vulnerable adults involved with Disabled Ramblers activities and minimise their risk of harm by:

- 1 Having appropriate safeguarding procedures and practices in place, tailored to the organisation's needs, and striving to ensure they are implemented.
- 2 Producing practical and appropriate guidance for the public and our volunteers on our procedures, and ensuring it is easily available and publicised.
- 3 Referring any concerns promptly to the appropriate authorities.

Our specific policies and procedures include:

Equal opportunities policy	Clear policy, guidelines and procedures for volunteers to access and follow, recognising the right of everyone to protection regardless of age, gender, ethnic origin, sexuality, disability or beliefs.
Confidentiality procedures	Including a data protection policy
Guidance	Clear and targeted guidance appropriate to people's role within the Disabled Ramblers, well publicised and easily accessible. Currently we have guidance for ramble leaders on the Conduct of a Ramble and Ramble Report & Risk Assessment Form and our Rambling in Safety leaflet goes to all new members and is on the web.
Designated person	A Safeguarding Officer to coordinate policies, ensure guidance is distributed, deal with enquiries, record incidents and take further action when necessary.
Public liability insurance and incident reporting	A comprehensive public liability insurance policy covering volunteers, with an effective incident reporting system. Copies of reports are stored securely in compliance with relevant legislation, and are available for the insurers to view in the case of any claims or allegations.
Training and awareness raising	Awareness training can be provided to anyone who in the course of their Disabled Ramblers' activities has regular and close contact with children and vulnerable adults.

1.5 Updates and revisions

The Disabled Ramblers safeguarding policy, procedures and guidelines are subject to change at any time, based on updated legislation and feedback regarding best practice.

2. Guidance for the Public and Disabled Ramblers Members

We are committed to ensuring the well-being of everyone who participates in Disabled Ramblers' activities and will take every practical step to minimise the risk of harm, paying particular attention to the needs of those who are most vulnerable, including children and vulnerable adults. We are also committed to supporting our hardworking volunteers who help deliver our charitable aims.

Please help us by reading the following guidance and following it where appropriate. It is particularly relevant to children and young people; their parents, guardians and carers; vulnerable adults and others with special needs; and their carers and support workers.

We work to make rambling accessible to all, and want to share its benefits with as wide a range of people as possible. We are committed to equal opportunities and aim to treat everyone with dignity and respect, and not to discriminate on grounds of age, ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, disability or beliefs.

Everyone is welcome to participate in our activities, so long as an activity is practically appropriate for a particular individual. However we are not able to provide specialist care and support for those that need it. We are also unable to accept responsibility for children under the age of 18. When attending Disabled Ramblers activities you should:

- 1 Check that an activity is appropriate for you before turning up. Joining Instructions for rambles usually include an indication of length and difficulty so check this carefully, and follow any advice about clothing and equipment. If in doubt, contact the organisers in advance.
- 2 If you are under 18, you will need to be accompanied by a responsible adult when participating in activities, such as your parent, legal guardian, carer, teacher or youth worker.
- 3 Please do not be offended if asked for proof of age.
- 4 If you are a responsible adult accompanying children or young people under 18, be aware that you are responsible for their direct care and supervision, and that this is not the responsibility of Disabled Ramblers volunteers.
- 5 If you are an adult who is unable for whatever reason to care for yourself independently, or needs specific help in order to participate in an activity safely (for example because of an illness or disability), you must be accompanied by another adult such as a carer or support worker who takes responsibility for your care. If you are also a Disabled Ramblers member and the activity is aimed at members, there is no need for your carer or support worker to be a member too. This person must be a walker, not a scooter user. They must accompany you on the ramble and walk alongside, not just bring you to the ramble.
- 6 If you are a carer or support worker accompanying someone who is unable to care for themselves independently or who needs special assistance, please be aware you are responsible for their direct care and/or special assistance, and that this is not the responsibility of Disabled Ramblers volunteers.

- 7 Please tell the ramble leader or organiser discreetly and in confidence about any medical conditions that may affect the ability of you or the people in your care to participate safely in the activity.
- 8 Before and during the activity, please follow the advice of the leader or activity organiser. Leaders have to take responsibility for everyone's safety and enjoyment, and can refuse to accept people who in their judgement may place themselves or the group in danger or seriously disrupt the activity.
- 9 If you have any concerns about the behaviour of anyone participating in an activity, such as abusive, threatening or inappropriate behaviour, raise this discreetly with the ramble leader. If you have concerns that a child or vulnerable person is being placed in danger or abused, you can raise this with the Disabled Ramblers' Safeguarding Officer and /or the NSPCC helpline (tel 0808 800 5000, www.nspcc.org.uk/helpline) or the relevant local authority.

3. Guidance for Disabled Ramblers Volunteers

3.1 Who should read this guidance

Any member of the Disabled Ramblers who is involved in organising rambles.

3.2 Why we need this guidance

The Disabled Ramblers provides activities for a wide range of people. We have a duty of care to ensure the well-being of everyone who participates in Disabled Ramblers' activities and to minimise the risk of harm, and a moral duty as well as a legal and an insurance obligation to safeguard those who are particularly vulnerable, including children and vulnerable adults. Also it is vital we support fully our volunteers, including protecting them from potential liabilities and false suspicions and allegations of abuse.

3.3 General principles

The Disabled Ramblers works to make rambling accessible to all, including children and vulnerable adults. We are also committed to equal opportunities and aim to treat everyone with dignity and respect, and not to discriminate on grounds of age, ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, disability or beliefs.

While we are the experts at providing and supporting rambling activities, we can't provide specialist care, supervision or support for children and for those who are unable to care independently for themselves. Children under 18 and those with special needs must be accompanied by others who take responsibility for meeting their needs.

It is important to ensure that volunteers don't work unsupervised on a regular basis with children and vulnerable adults. Otherwise our activities might be classified by law as 'regulated activities' and the person carrying them out will require enhanced checks. Organisations which knowingly allow barred people to work on regulated activities are breaking the law.

Participation in all activities is subject to their suitability for individual participants. Leaders of rambles and other activities sometimes need to make judgements that take into account the safety and enjoyment of everyone involved in an activity. So long as a judgement is not based on stereotypical assumption or prejudice, they are well within their rights to refuse a participant if they believe this would result in danger to the individual or danger or major disruption to the rest of the group.

It is also not our responsibility to investigate or intervene in suspected cases of abuse or ill treatment, but it **is** our responsibility to refer such cases to the appropriate authorities, and to recognise that as organisers and leaders of activities in a position of trust, we may be made aware of signs of abuse, or even have it disclosed to us.

When organising and running rambles:

- 1 Ensure that when advertising rambles you help potential participants judge their suitability by including details such as:
 - a ramble length,

- b difficulty category,
 - c duration
 - d advice on matters such as clothing, footwear and equipment required,
 - e contact details for more information.
- 2 Always report incidents promptly and correctly using the standard form.
 - 3 Be sensitive about taking photos and films of activities. It's always polite to ask the participants first if anyone would prefer not to be featured, and respect their wishes. Consider using the form at Appendix 1.

At the start of the ramble:

- 1 Inform people what to expect on the ramble
- 2 Say that people with medical concerns can raise them discreetly and confidentially with you. If they do, take a note of emergency contact numbers or vital medical details that could be of use to the emergency services.
- 3 Remind adults accompanying children and young people of their responsibility for direct care and supervision. Remind carers of their responsibilities.
- 4 Ask to see proof of age if an unaccompanied person appears to be 18 or younger.
- 5 Don't be afraid to exclude people for whom you believe the activity to be unsuitable.
- 6 Ensure that all participants complete the signing-in sheet.

6.7 Concerns about abuse

Cases of abuse are thankfully rare, but if you regularly welcome children and vulnerable adults, it is possible you may have concerns about abuse from your own observations of participants. Abuse can include not only physical and sexual abuse but also emotional abuse and neglect. Vulnerable adults can also be at risk of financial exploitation or may come to harm through self-neglect or their own behaviour.

Judging outward signs of abuse can be difficult as there are usually other explanations for particular signs, and sometimes it is matter of judgement or instinct, or a combination of indicators. Signs might include:

- Marks in odd places and unexplained injuries, or clothing that appears to hide these.
- Evidence of alcohol or drug misuse.
- Fear of parents or carers.
- Uncharacteristic behaviour or language.
- Habitual severe criticism, discrimination or deliberate humiliation by a parent or carer.

- Constant hunger, lack of personal hygiene, neglected appearance.
- Withdrawn, angry or violent behaviour or unexplained distress.

You may also directly witness abuse taking place or have concerns about abuse raised with you by another participant. As trusted adults, you may even have abuse disclosed to you by a victim

- If anyone is under serious threat of physical harm or in need of urgent treatment during a Disabled Ramblers' activity:
 - 1 **Dial 999 immediately** and ask for the **police**, if a criminal offence is being or is likely to be committed, and/or **ambulance** in cases of medical need.
 - 2 Alert the Chairman as soon as possible.
 - 3 When it is safe to do so, make notes of the incident and its outcome. It may be helpful to refer to the questions in Appendix 2 when making notes.
 - 4 If there is an issue of violence or abuse, be prepared to answer further questions from the police and/or the local authority. They may ask for a written report which is likely to include many of the questions in Appendix 2.
 - 5 Fill in and file an incident report and attach copies of any written reports to the police or local authority. Don't include sensitive personal details on the form.
- If there is no immediate danger but you have a suspicion or concern that abuse is taking place or when an allegation of abuse has been made:
 - 1 Make a note of your concerns as soon as you can, ideally within an hour of any incident.
 - 2 Contact the Safeguarding Officer without delay to agree next steps. In consultation with the Chairman, the Safeguarding Officer will assist you, where necessary, to take up your concerns with the appropriate local authority children and family services team. Such a team will normally ask for a written report within 24 hours and will advise what should be in it: however it will typically include many of the questions in Appendix 2. They may return to you with follow up questions.
 - 3 Fill in and file an incident report within 24 hours and attach copies of any written reports to the police or local authority. Don't include sensitive personal details on the form.
- Generally:
 - 1 When working with children and vulnerable adults, be sensible and self-aware, and avoid placing yourself into situations where your actions may be misinterpreted.
 - 2 Avoid agreeing to supervise a child or vulnerable adult while a parent or carer is absent, especially if this means being left alone with them.

Don't arrange to meet with them socially without their parent or carer outside the Disabled Ramblers' activity.

- 3 If a participant discloses abuse to you, be sympathetic and supportive. Thank them for telling you, tell them it is not their fault, but don't agree to keep confidences. Explain it is your duty to pass on information appropriately and tell them what you will do next.
- 4 Keep concerns confidential. Only share details as necessary with the Safeguarding Officer and the appropriate authorities.
- 5 Don't risk putting yourself in difficulty or danger by attempting to investigate the case yourself or to challenge the alleged abuser.
- 6 Don't be afraid to raise genuine concerns about volunteers if you see examples of bad practice or failure to follow our policy or even have suspicions of abuse. Speak discreetly to the Safeguarding Officer.

Useful contacts

- **Emergency:** Police/Ambulance tel 999
- **Disabled Ramblers Safeguarding Officer**
rambles@disabledramblers.co.uk
- **Local authority child and family services.** Contact the County or unitary council and ask for child and family services. See the phone book or www.direct.gov.uk which has a list of all councils in the UK.
- **Police** (non-emergency calls). England 0300 123 1212, Scotland 01382 207101, Wales 101.
- **NSPCC helpline** tel 0808 800 5000, www.nspcc.org.uk/helpline

Appendix 1:



Publicity, Photography, Film and Video Consent Form

I (print name) _____ consent to have mine or my child(ren)'s image recorded whilst attending activities organised by the Disabled Ramblers. I understand that my image may be used for publicity purposes to promote the work of the Disabled Ramblers.

I am aware that my image may be used in a publishable format, for example, television, cinema, brochures, posters, newspaper and Internet articles or displays and may also feature on the Disabled Ramblers website.

I give my consent for photos of myself of my child(ren) to be used in this manner, by the Disabled Ramblers.

I am aware that my or my child(ren)s personal details, for example name and address **will not** be passed on to any other organisation without my full written consent and will be held only by the Disabled Ramblers for record keeping purposes.

Print Name:

Name of Child (if required):

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 2: Questions when referring concerns about abuse

The following questions are likely to be asked by the local authority in the event that you refer to them a concern about abuse. You may find it helpful to consider them when making notes or a referral. Keep any written documents containing personal details strictly confidential and store them in a safe place.

- 1 Your name and contact details.
- 2 The organisation's name and contact details.
- 3 Your role.
- 4 Child or vulnerable adult's name, age/date of birth (estimated if unknown) and contact details.
- 5 Whether or not you are reporting concerns on behalf of someone else
- 6 A brief description of what prompted the concerns, including dates, times and other specific factors, making a clear distinction between fact, opinion and hearsay, including:
 - Any visible bruising or injuries.
 - Any indirect signs such as behavioural changes.
 - The child or vulnerable adult's account of any signs or injuries.
- 7 Whether or not the child or vulnerable adult has been spoken to directly, and their account of any signs or injuries, or any disclosures.
- 8 Any contact with parents/carers or support workers including:
 - Their names and contact details.
 - Times and dates of discussion.
 - What was said.
- 9 Has anyone been alleged to be the abuser? Give further details.
- 10 Where and when do you suspect the abuse to have taken place? Was it on your activity or elsewhere?
- 11 Is anyone else involved and have they been contacted? Are there any witnesses?
 - Their names and contact details.
 - Times and dates of discussion.
 - What was said.