

Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk

Disabled Ramblers' General Guidance

IMPORTANT NOTE: This document is intended for general guidance only. It does not and cannot cover every possible eventuality. Any safeguarding issues should always be referred immediately to the designated Safeguarding Officer for action. It should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy document.

1. The Purpose of this Guidance

Protecting people and safeguarding responsibilities should be a governance priority for all charities. The Disabled Ramblers is committed to meeting its responsibilities in this regard. This guidance document is intended to give a brief overview of who it applies to, who is responsible and what we will do if a safeguarding issue comes to our attention.

This Guidance document forms the basis of the Code of Conduct to which Disabled Ramblers expects its members and volunteers to adhere.

2. Who should read this guidance?

All members of Disabled Ramblers, especially those who participate in rambles or other events organised by Disabled Ramblers. It should also be drawn to the attention of – and ~~ideally~~ read by – any non-members who attend such activities.

3. Who are children and adults at risk?

For the purpose of this guidance 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 most child protection purposes, a child is someone under the age of 18. However, in some child protection contexts, a child is someone who is under 16

An **adult at risk** 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, through 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.

- this is not intended to be an exhaustive list and it must be remembered that abuse of, or harm to, vulnerable people can take many forms and may not always be apparent through physical symptoms.

4. Welcoming children and adults at risk

Disabled Ramblers works to make rambling accessible to all and share its benefits with as wide a range of people as possible. We welcome children and adults at risk 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 provide and support 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.

It should be noted in particular that:

- (a) 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.
- (b) 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 of Disabled Ramblers, we do not expect their carer or support worker to be a member too. This person must be a walker, not a scooter user.
- (c) 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.

5. Who is responsible?

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

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

6. What we will do

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

- (a) Having appropriate safeguarding guidance in place and ensuring it is available and adhered to by our volunteers and any other participants in Disabled Ramblers' activities.
- (b) Providing practical and appropriate guidance for members, volunteers and any other participants in our activities if a safeguarding issue arises.
- (c) Referring any concerns promptly to the designated Safeguarding Officer and thence to the appropriate authorities.

Our policies and procedures include:

Equal opportunities policy	A clear policy for volunteers to follow, recognising the right of everyone to protection regardless of age, gender, ethnic origin, sexuality, disability or beliefs.
Confidentiality procedures	A data protection policy that has full regard for the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation.
Guidance	Clear guidance for ramble leaders, using our Rambles Procedure Manual and associated documents. Our Rambling in Safety leaflet goes to all new members and is available on The Disabled Ramblers website.
Designated person	A designated Safeguarding Officer to 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.

7. Updates and revisions

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

Author: John Cuthbertson (Chairman)

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