



Our Safeguarding Standards

1. Safe leadership and governance

Our organisation has a duty to ensure Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People takes all reasonable steps to protect all individuals associated with the organisation from harm. Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People will identify at least one designated trustee for safeguarding who will support the work of the organisation, the safeguarding lead and other key colleagues. They must also be satisfied that, when appropriate, our partners have adequate safeguarding measures in place.

To enable our board of trustees to fulfil this duty, the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) will provide the organisation with a regular update on the implementation of activity and associated plans and provide timely reports of safeguarding incidents which will be shared with the Board each quarter.

Led by the Trustees, the Chief Officer and DSL will actively promote an awareness of and commitment to safeguarding by enabling access to guidance, training, and appropriate support and by modelling best practice within the operations of the organisation.

Representatives from the organisation will act as the organisation's designated deputy safeguard leads, working to support the DSL with direct and strategic oversight of safeguarding issues and the implementation of the safeguarding action plan in collaboration with the operational safeguarding team who provide a network of safeguarding support for our clients and colleagues.

Support should be provided to the DSL to ensure that strategic safeguarding issues are managed effectively and that proactive measures are in place to prevent harm across all areas of operation.

All colleagues have a responsibility to challenge poor practice and to act if there is a cause for concern about a person at risk, or the behaviour of anyone towards people at risk, but it is not their responsibility to determine if abuse has occurred or what action is required to protect the people at risk. Responsibility for deciding whether to escalate a concern to the appropriate authority lies with Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People's DSL and deputy leads.

2. Influence and empowerment

Colleagues will be given the support and opportunity to be fully engaged in and to inform Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People safeguarding policies, guidance, and activities.

Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People's network of engaged colleagues and their external relationships with professionals help us develop best practice, a proactive safeguarding culture, policy and procedures.

Equally, understanding lived experiences will help us to create safeguarding

practices which are relevant.

We build effective and professional relationships with the individuals who work with or volunteer for Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People, so that they feel welcome and safe within the organisation.

3. Equality and inclusion

Our colleagues are mindful of individuals' diverse circumstances and recognise the support needs of those who are potentially at greater risk. Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People has specific policies in place that promote equality and respect diversity. We are aware of and are sensitive to the needs of individuals' protected characteristics.

All colleagues champion and model attitudes and behaviours that respect the rights of all and are inclusive, well informed, and responsive to diverse needs. They reflect on how discrimination and exclusion, whether intentional or unintentional, might work against the development of a safe and inclusive culture and develop proactive strategies to address this.

Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People is committed to ensuring that the policies, procedures, and guidance are in place. Materials produced must be in accessible language and formats that promote inclusion, including for non-specialists, volunteers, and deaf individuals. All involved in our services must be informed of the support and complaints processes available to them.

We have an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy in place demonstrating our commitment to this.

4. Working safely

Safeguarding is integrated throughout the recruitment process. Building a culture of safeguarding depends on our ability to demonstrate our commitment to safeguarding amongst all those who join the organisation as employees or volunteers. This means:

- Including a statement about our commitment to safeguarding in all job adverts
- Including specific safeguarding questions in interviews
- Completing background/ID checks on all potential new starters and volunteers
- Safeguarding is a compulsory part of the induction process for new starters, including our volunteers. It is the responsibility of the recruiting manager to ensure new starters complete this training.

Colleagues receive safeguarding training tailored to their individual roles and responsibilities, with specialist training provided to staff with designated responsibilities for safeguarding. All colleagues are trained and supported to effectively implement Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People's safeguarding

policies, recognise indicators of abuse, respond effectively to safeguarding concerns, create safe environments for deaf people, support colleagues and peers, and to safeguard themselves.

The Chief Officer is responsible for maintaining an accurate, up-to-date record of all colleague training, including expiry dates where appropriate. All elements of supervision should discuss reflect on safeguarding knowledge, understanding, and training in 1:1 meetings, team meetings, target-setting and performance development reviews.

5. Safe spaces

Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People considers ways to reduce siloed work practices and foster close relationships across the organisation, promoting safety and wellbeing. By harnessing technology and adopting a hybrid approach, this allows for a variety of working styles and promotes collaborative work.

Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People policies promote the use of safe online environments, including websites, social media and bespoke ways for individuals to communicate and seek support.

Colleagues are proactive in identifying and mitigating online risks. The online environment is used in accordance with Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People's code of conduct and related policies.

6. Safe processes

Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People's principles and operations relating to safeguarding are clearly defined in a range of documents. Policies, procedures, and guidance notes are regularly reviewed and updated, ensuring that they adhere to relevant legislation and national guidance, aspire to best practice, and reflect the needs and strategy of the organisation. Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People's safeguarding policies are publicly available on our website.

Clear procedures exist for reporting and escalating safeguarding concerns and for complaints and whistleblowing. These are understood across the organisation.

Colleagues are well-informed about their roles, responsibilities, reporting procedures and privacy obligations.

Our colleagues:

- Feel empowered and supported to draw attention to breaches of the code of conduct within the organisation and to challenge these behaviours
- Have good knowledge of the different ways deaf people may express concerns or distress and disclose harm

- Have a supportive and safe environment for any individual who discloses information linked to harm, abuse or adults at risk
- Know who to talk to if they are feeling unsafe and know that they will be informed and included in any decisions around further support
- Know that failure to report safeguarding concerns will be considered a serious breach of Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People's safeguarding procedures and may result in disciplinary action

When a concern is raised, clear and appropriate action will be taken. Everyone in the organisation is confident that concerns are responded to actively, and effectively.

The key responsibility of anyone involved in safeguarding is to act upon their concerns. Recording and reporting alone do not comprise a sufficient duty of care. The colleague who reports and/or refers a concern has a responsibility to follow-up on their action with their point of contact, internally or externally dealing with the case. We endeavour to seek timely feedback to ensure this is provided to individuals, families, and our colleagues who raise concerns or complaints.

Complaints, concerns, and incidents are analysed to identify causes and systematic failures to inform continuous improvement, internally and externally. The guidance and procedures will be updated regularly to ensure that any gaps and weaknesses are addressed without delay.

Safeguarding practice is actively monitored throughout our partnerships and engagement work. Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People will monitor compliance through:

- Including specific questions on safeguarding in reviews and on the agendas of joint meetings, where relevant
- Where relevant, creating meaningful links between Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People, partners and external safeguarding leads, including opportunities to share best practice and expertise
- Where specific safeguarding concerns have arisen, Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People will review and address these concerns
- We will always act on concerns which arise, using the most appropriate channel, whether that is Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People's processes or those of the partner organisations
- Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People colleagues have a duty to report any concerns relating to our activity with partners

7. Care and collaboration

Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People aims to embed a culture of care within our organisation. In practice, this means that each colleague has a duty of care

towards the individuals they have contact with in the course of their work. This may include:

- Colleagues including volunteers
- Individuals (people who may engage with Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People in a variety of ways, from accessing our services, to one-off communication via Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People' social media channels, or live chat)
- Family members and next of kin who may engage with us
- Professionals (for example project partners and local authorities)

Colleagues also have a duty of care towards themselves; to keep themselves safe and well in order to effectively perform their duties. All colleagues must adhere to processes that ensure the safety of themselves and others. Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People specifies a variety of processes and expectations designed to help individuals to safeguard effectively by:

- Creating and maintaining professional relationships
- Recognising and adhering to professional boundaries
- Working within their competence
- Using appropriate channels to de-brief, offer or ask for support
- Understand the support in place which can be accessed i.e.; wellbeing groups, one to one sessions with our safeguarding and wellbeing officer

Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People is committed to providing a work environment which supports the wellbeing of all colleagues and enables them to carry out their duties effectively. We aim to continue to develop an open culture in which physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing is taken seriously, and colleagues feel empowered to seek the help and support they need. Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People's executive team and managers take responsibility for creating and leading a wellbeing culture which is shared by all. All colleagues are encouraged to contribute ideas and skills which may benefit their peers and the organisation. We also encourage individuals to accept responsibility for their own wellbeing.

Conclusion

Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People will always actively seek to improve the quality and standards of our approach to safeguarding.

The DSL will work to ensure Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People continuously develops new relationships and networks which will provide high quality and innovative learning opportunities to inspire our safeguarding practices.

We will offer tailored support to colleagues to encourage a learning culture and colleagues are expected to take individual responsibility for professional development, including embracing positive change.

Wakefield and District Society for Deaf People will proactively engage with other charities, statutory bodies, and other agencies to ensure that we are aware of and contribute to best practice in safeguarding across the sector.

Our Commitment to Safeguarding

1. Improve clarity around accountability and responsibility
2. Introduce a set of organisational safeguarding standards
3. Appoint a designated Safeguarding Officer
4. Make our safeguarding standards available online
5. Implement a new and improved reporting system
6. Review of safe practice and safer ways of working

For more information, please ask to see our Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children policies and procedures.