



Safeguarding Children – Overview for volunteers

This guidance summarises the safeguarding responsibilities for volunteers who have contact with children or adults at risk while volunteering with the Huntington's Disease Association. It draws from the organisation's full Safeguarding Children's Policy. Volunteers should read this overview carefully. The full policy is available on the 'Volunteer Hub'.

1. Our Commitment to Safeguarding

The Huntington's Disease Association believes that every child and young person has the right to be safe. We believe children should be able to grow and develop without experiencing abuse or neglect.

Safeguarding is a fundamental part of our work and we take our responsibility to protect and promote the wellbeing of children and adults at risk very seriously.

All volunteers who have contact with children or adults at risk have a responsibility to act if they have any concern about someone's safety or wellbeing.

2. Your Responsibilities as a Volunteer

If your volunteer role involves contact with children or adults at risk (for example if you volunteer at a branch or group), you are expected to:

- Read this safeguarding overview
- Complete safeguarding training at least every three years
- Be aware of possible signs of abuse or neglect and how to report them
- Know how to respond if someone shares a concern with you
- Know who to report safeguarding concerns to

It is **not your role to investigate concerns**. Your role is to **recognise concerns, respond appropriately, and report them**.

3. What is Children's Safeguarding?

A child is anyone under the age of 18.

Safeguarding means:

- Protecting children from abuse and neglect
- Preventing harm to health or development
- Ensuring children grow up with safe and effective care
- Taking action so that children can have the best possible outcomes

Safeguarding also includes protecting adults at risk, who may be vulnerable because of age, disability, illness or other circumstances. Adults safeguarding is covered in a separate overview document.

Safeguarding always takes priority over confidentiality.

4. Types of Child Abuse

The four main types of child abuse are:

Physical abuse Deliberately causing physical harm, such as hitting, shaking, burning or poisoning. Possible signs include: • Unexplained injuries • Frequent bruising or fractures • Injuries that do not match the explanation given	Emotional abuse Persistent emotional harm, such as humiliation, blaming, intimidation or rejection. Possible signs include: • Withdrawal or anxiety • Low self-esteem • Fear of doing something wrong
Sexual abuse Any sexual activity involving a child, including online abuse or exploitation. Possible signs include: • Sexual behaviour inappropriate for age • Sexual knowledge beyond what would be expected • Sudden behavioural changes	Neglect Failing to meet a child's basic needs, such as food, clothing, shelter, supervision or medical care. Possible signs include: • Poor hygiene • Inadequate clothing • Persistent hunger • Untreated medical problems

5. Domestic Abuse

Children who see, hear or experience domestic abuse are victims in their own right. Domestic abuse can have serious and long-lasting effects on a child's emotional and physical wellbeing and should always be treated as a safeguarding concern.

6. If You Are Worried About a Child

If someone is in **immediate danger or needs urgent medical attention**, call **999**.

If you have a safeguarding concern:

1. Stay calm.
2. Do not investigate.
3. Record what you have seen or heard.
4. Report to your staff contact at the charity or the Designated / Deputy Safeguarding Lead(s) for children, if you are not able to contact any of the above then please contact any member of HDA staff

There are **no concerns that are too small**. If something does not feel right, report it.

7. If Someone Discloses Abuse to You

If a child or adult tells you something concerning:

- Stay calm and listen carefully
- Do not show shock or disbelief
- Reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling you
- Do not promise to keep the information secret
- Explain that you will need to share the information to help keep them safe
- Do not ask leading questions or investigate
- Do not confront the person being accused
- Make a written record as soon as possible using their own words where possible

- Report to your staff contact at the charity or the Designated / Deputy Safeguarding Lead(s) for children, if you are not able to contact any of the above then please contact any member of HDA staff

8. Recording Concerns

If you are told something or witness something concerning:

- Write down exactly what was said or observed
- Use the person's own words where possible
- Avoid interpretation or opinion
- Give the written record to your staff contact at the charity or the Designated Safeguarding Lead for children

Safeguarding records must be stored securely, once you have shared the information please destroy the record that you have made. The staff member will have added your information to our service user database.

9. Confidentiality

You should never promise to keep safeguarding information secret.

Safeguarding concerns must always be shared with your staff contact at the charity or the Designated Safeguarding Lead for children.

Information will only be shared with those who need to know in order to protect the person at risk.

10. Concerns About a Staff Member or Another Volunteer

If you are concerned that a staff member or volunteer may be involved in abuse, harm or neglect:

- Report to the Volunteering Manager or the Designated / Deputy Safeguarding Lead(s) for children
- If it relates to a Safeguarding lead report to Cath Stanley, Chief Executive

If a concern is raised about a volunteer, volunteering activities will cease while an investigation takes place.

If you have concerns about how a child is being treated or protected by the Huntington's Disease Association, especially if you feel concerns aren't being properly addressed internally, you can seek guidance from the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline

11. Safeguarding Contacts

Key contacts		
Volunteering Manager Stephen Jeffs	Phone: 0121 647 8263	Email: stephen.jeffs@hda.org.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for children James O'Connor	Phone: 07718 424 905	Email: james.o'connor@hda.org.uk
Deputy DSL Ruth Sands	Phone: 0208 150 5980	Email: ruth.Sands@hda.org.uk
Deputy DSL Helen Santini	Phone: 01279 507656	Email: helen.Santii@hda.org.uk
Deputy DSL Anne Filson	Phone: 01535 281358	Email: anne.filson@hda.org.uk
Chief Executive Cath Stanley	Phone: 0151 482 9067	Email: cath.stanley@hda.org.uk
NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline (Can be contacted if you have concerns about how a child is being treated or protected within an organisation, especially if they feel those concerns aren't being properly addressed internally)	Phone: 0800 028 0285	