



Safeguarding Adults – Overview for volunteers

This guidance summarises the safeguarding responsibilities for volunteers who have contact with adults at risk while volunteering with the Huntington's Disease Association. It draws from the organisation's full Safeguarding Adults 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 every adult has the right to live free from abuse, harm, or neglect.

Safeguarding is a core part of our work, and all volunteers have a responsibility to act if they have any concern about an adult's safety or wellbeing.

2. Your Responsibilities as a Volunteer

If your volunteer role involves contact with adults at risk, you are expected to:

- Read this safeguarding overview.
- Complete safeguarding training at least every three years (provided by the Huntington's Disease Association).
- 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.

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

3. What is Adult Safeguarding?

An adult at risk is someone aged 18 or over who:

- Has care and support needs (whether care is provided or not), and
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- As a result of those needs, cannot protect themselves.

Safeguarding means:

- Protecting adults from abuse, harm, or neglect.
- Preventing harm to health, wellbeing, or development.
- Promoting independence, choice, and self-determination while managing risk.
- Acting in the adult's best interests, including respecting their views, wishes, feelings, and beliefs wherever possible.

Safeguarding always takes priority over confidentiality.

4. Types of Abuse

Abuse can occur in person or online and may be intentional or unintentional.

Abuse can be

Physical abuse Hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate physical sanctions. Possible signs include: • unexplained injuries • frequent bruising • Injuries that do not match the explanation	Neglect Ignoring care needs, withholding necessities such as food, medication, or heating. Indicators of neglect may include: • Weight loss • Pressure ulcers • Dehydration • Malnutrition • Complaints of pain or discomfort • Complaints of hunger or thirst • Reduced communication skills or independence • Reluctance by the abuser to report on health or progress
Sexual abuse Rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment, or pressure into sexual activity. Signs may include: • Inappropriate sexual behaviour • Fear of touch • Withdrawal	Emotional or psychological abuse Threats, humiliation, coercion, controlling behaviour, isolation, or verbal abuse. Signs may include: • Lack of confidence and self-esteem • Depression, withdrawal • Changes in behaviour (for example, becoming more aggressive) • Lack of trust in others
Financial or material abuse Theft, fraud, exploitation, or misuse of property, benefits, or inheritance. Indicators of financial or material abuse may include: • Fear of making decisions • Change in living conditions • Sudden changes in finances or constant supervision by the abuser • Lack of basic items • Money or possessions going missing • Unable to account for spending, incorrect receipts • Worrying about money • Insufficient money to provide for basic needs	Discriminatory abuse Abuse based on age, disability, gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, or other protected characteristics. Indicators of discriminatory abuse may include: • Using racist or sexist descriptions or innuendos • Victimising somebody because of a disability • Failing to respect religious faiths and practices

Institutional abuse Mistreatment or neglect within an organisation, violating dignity or human rights. Indicators of organisational abuse may include: • Complaints not being responded to • Inflexible routines • Lack of individualised care • Reluctance of staff to report on progress • Increased withdrawal, apathy or challenging behaviour from residents or individuals • Medication not administered	Domestic abuse Controlling, coercive, or threatening behaviour between adults who are intimate partners or family members. Signs may include: • Fractures • Bruising • Absence from work / activity • Isolation • Depression
Modern slavery Slavery, human trafficking, forced labour, or domestic servitude. Indicators of modern slavery may include: • Severe weight loss • Poor skin condition • Poor hygiene • Extreme anxiety and fear • Low self-esteem • Suicide and self-harm risk	Self-neglect Self-neglect includes failure to care for oneself in a way that causes or risks serious harm, e.g., hoarding. Signs may include: • Unkempt appearance • Dirty or untidy surroundings • Hoarding • Non-attendance at health appointments • Lack of engagement with health and social services

4a. Preventing Radicalisation (Prevent and Channel)

Some adults may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism or extremist behaviour. The charity takes part in Prevent, which aims to stop people from becoming involved in terrorism before any criminal activity occurs.

Your role as a volunteer:

- Be aware that some adults may be vulnerable due to mental health issues, learning difficulties, isolation, or other factors.
- Look out for signs that someone may be being radicalised, such as sudden changes in behaviour, extreme views, or isolating themselves from others.
- Do not try to investigate or challenge the person yourself.
- Report to your staff contact at the charity or the Designated / Deputy Safeguarding Lead(s) for Adults, if you are not able to contact any of the above then please contact any member of HDA staff

4b. Cuckooing

Cuckooing is when someone takes over another person's home and tries to control their life. This often involves exploitation and may sometimes be linked to organised crime or gangs, though not always. It can start with someone appearing very charming or caring.

Who is at risk:

- Adults who are vulnerable due to age, disability, illness, mental health, or other circumstances.

Signs a person may be experiencing cuckooing:

- Withdrawal from family or friends

- Unexplained changes, e.g., loss of a care package
- Debt, rent arrears, or housing issues
- Stopping attendance at groups, appointments, or activities
- Unexplained people in their life
- Complaints of anti-social behaviour at their home
- Making then withdrawing allegations
- Unexplained injuries

Your role as a volunteer:

- Be aware of these signs and take any concerns seriously
- Do not investigate yourself or confront anyone
- Report to your staff contact at the charity or the Designated / Deputy Safeguarding Lead(s) for Adults, if you are not able to contact the any of the above then please contact any member of HDA staff

5. Hate Crime

Adults at risk may also be targets of hate crime. This includes crimes motivated by:

- Disability
- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Transgender identity

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

6. If You Are Worried About an Adult

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

If you have a safeguarding concern:

- Stay calm.
- Do not investigate.
- Record what you have seen or heard.
- Report immediately to your staff contact at the charity or the Designated / Deputy Safeguarding Lead(s) for Adults, if you are not able to contact the any of he above then please contact with 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 an adult shares concerns with you:

- Stay calm and listen carefully.
- Do not show shock or disbelief.
- Reassure them that telling you was the right thing.
- Do not promise secrecy.
- Explain you need to share the information to help keep them safe.
- Do not ask leading questions or investigate.
- Do not confront the alleged perpetrator.
- Record the disclosure in writing as soon as possible using their own words.
- Report to your staff contact at the charity or the Designated / Deputy Safeguarding Lead(s) for Adults, if you are not able to contact the any of the above then please contact any member of HDA staff

8. Recording Concerns

- Write down exactly what was said or observed.
- Use the adult's own words where possible.
- Avoid giving interpretations or opinions.
- Give the written record to your staff contact at the charity or the Designated Safeguarding Lead for adults

Safeguarding records must be stored securely until you have shared them with a staff member, 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

- Do not promise to keep safeguarding information secret.
- Only share information with those who need to know to protect the adult.

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 Adults
- 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.

11. Safeguarding Contacts

Key contacts		
Volunteering Manager Stephen Jeffs	Phone: 0121 647 8263	Email: stephen.jeffs@hda.org.uk
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for adults Ruth Sands	Phone: 0208 150 5980	Email: ruth.Sands@hda.org.uk
Deputy DSL Helen Santini	Phone: 01279 507656	Email: helen.Santini@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