

**Name of organisation: West Dorset Western Area Transport Group (WATAG).**

Safeguarding Lead: Committee Chair, Nick Hurrell, watag@hotmail.com

Safeguarding Deputy: Committee Vice Chair, John Collingwood, watag@hotmail.com

| Section heading               | Section content   |
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| <p><b>1. Introduction</b></p> | <p>WATAG makes a positive contribution to a strong and safe community and recognises the right of every individual to stay safe. We will ensure that our activities are safe for our volunteers and users. Unfortunately, people may pose a risk to adults at risk and may wish to harm or abuse them. Also, accidents can happen unless steps are taken to minimise them. Therefore, safeguarding is everybody's business.</p> <p>WATAG may encounter adults at risk through the following activities:<br/>           Committee meetings<br/>           Public meetings<br/>           Events within the community</p> <p>The types of contact with adults at risk will be on a many to one and / or a one-to-one basis.</p> <p>This policy seeks to ensure that WATAG undertakes its responsibilities with regard to protection of adults at risk and will respond to concerns appropriately. The policy establishes a framework to support paid and unpaid staff in their practices and clarifies the organisation's expectations.</p> |
| <p><b>2. Legislation</b></p>  | <p>The principal pieces of legislation and Government Initiatives governing this policy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human rights Act 1998</li> <li>• Sexual Offences Act 2003</li> <li>• Mental Capacity Act 2005</li> <li>• Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006</li> <li>• Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) under the Mental Capacity Act 2005</li> <li>• Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 (which established the Disclosure &amp; Barring Service)</li> <li>• The Care Act 2014 – statutory guidance</li> <li>• Making Safeguarding Personal Guide 2014</li> <li>• Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole multi-agency Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures</li> <li>• Domestic Abuse Act 2021</li> <li>• Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>3. Definitions</b></p>  | <p>Safeguarding is about embedding practices throughout the organisation to ensure the protection of adults at risk wherever possible and responding to circumstances that arise.</p> <p>Abuse and harm can be caused by those inflicting harm or those who fail to act to prevent harm. Abuse is not restricted to any socio-economic group, gender, or</p>  |

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|                                  | <p>culture It can take a number of forms, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical abuse</li> <li>• Domestic violence</li> <li>• Coercive behaviour</li> <li>• Controlling behaviour</li> <li>• Forced marriage.</li> <li>• Radicalisation (Prevent duty)</li> <li>• Sexual abuse</li> <li>• Sexual exploitation</li> <li>• Psychological abuse</li> <li>• Financial or material abuse</li> <li>• Modern slavery</li> <li>• Human trafficking</li> <li>• Discriminatory abuse</li> <li>• Internet/cyberbullying</li> <li>• Organisational abuse</li> <li>• Neglect and acts of omission.</li> <li>• Self-neglect</li> </ul> <p><b>Definition of Adults at risk</b><br/>An adult at risk anyone aged 18 or over who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs), and</li> <li>• is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and</li> <li>• as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of, abuse or neglect.</li> </ul> <p>This <b>may</b> include a person who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is elderly and frail.</li> <li>• Has a mental illness including dementia</li> <li>• Has a physical or sensory disability</li> <li>• Has a learning disability</li> <li>• Has a severe physical illness</li> <li>• Is a substance misuser</li> <li>• Is homeless.</li> </ul> <p>The Care Act 2014 gives six safeguarding principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Empowerment</li> <li>2. Prevention</li> <li>3. Proportionality</li> <li>4. Protection</li> <li>5. Partnership</li> <li>6. Accountability</li> </ol> |
| <p><b>4. Mental Capacity</b></p> | <p>We will safeguard adults in a way that supports them in making choices and having control about how they want to live by following the principles of the Mental Capacity Act 2005.</p> <p>Therefore, we will only make a safeguarding referral with an adult's permission unless</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. an individual lacks the capacity to make a particular decision. To do this you must answer two questions:</li> </ol>   |

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|                                   | <p>Stage 1. Is there an impairment of or disturbance in the functioning of a person's mind or brain? If so,<br/> Stage 2. Is the impairment or disturbance sufficient that the person lacks the capacity to make a particular decision?<br/> The MCA says that a person is unable to make their own decision if they cannot do one or more of the following four things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• understand information given to them.</li> <li>• retain that information long enough to be able to make the decision.</li> <li>• weigh up the information available to make the decision.</li> <li>• communicate their decision – this could be by talking, using sign language or even simple muscle movements such as blinking an eye or squeezing a hand.</li> </ul> <p>2. the adult poses a risk to other adults with care and support needs or children (regardless of the capacity of the adult or victim)<br/> 3. a serious crime has been committed.<br/> WATAG will not tolerate the abuse of adults We will ensure that adults participate in their safeguarding arrangements and each individual is dealt with on a case-by-case basis. As adults may have different preferences, histories and lifestyles, the same process may not work for all.</p> <p>WATAG volunteers are not responsible for formally assessing mental capacity but must consider capacity in line with the Mental Care Act principles when deciding on consent to share information.</p>  |
| <p><b>5. Responsibilities</b></p> | <p><b>All volunteers and those contracted to work on the group's behalf</b> have responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies, and to pass on any welfare concerns using the required procedures.<br/> We expect all volunteers and contractors to promote good practice by being an excellent role model, contribute to discussions about safeguarding and to positively involve people in developing safe practices.</p> <p><b>Additional specific responsibilities</b></p> <p>The WATAG committee is responsible for ensuring that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The policy is in place and appropriate.</li> <li>• There is strategic oversight of safeguarding.</li> <li>• The policy is accessible.</li> <li>• The policy is implemented.</li> <li>• The policy is monitored and reviewed.</li> <li>• Sufficient resources (time and money) are allocated to ensure that the policy can be effectively implemented.</li> <li>• Promoting the welfare of adults at risk.</li> <li>• Ensure volunteers have access to appropriate training / information.</li> <li>• Receive volunteer concerns about safeguarding and respond to all seriously, swiftly, and appropriately.</li> <li>• Keep up to date with local arrangements for safeguarding and DBS.</li> <li>• Develop and maintain effective links with relevant agencies.)</li> <li>• Where roles meet the eligibility criteria for DBS checks, appropriate checks will be undertaken in line with DBS guidance.</li> </ul> <p>s.</p> |

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| <p><b>6. Link with other policies</b></p>                      | <p>The scope of this Safeguarding Policy is broad ranging and in practice, it will be implemented via a range of policies and procedures within the organisation. These include:</p> <p><b>Safe recruitment</b><br/> WATAG ensures safe recruitment through the following processes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All prospective volunteers are informally interviewed.</li> <li>• Reference checks (where appropriate)</li> <li>• Clear role descriptions</li> <li>• Code of conduct</li> <li>• Self-declaration of criminal convictions (if DBS eligible)</li> </ul> <p><b>Whistleblowing</b><br/> WATAG is dedicated to the highest standards of operation, probity, and accountability. In line with this commitment, volunteers, contractors, and others with serious concerns about any aspect of our work are encouraged to come forward and voice those concerns. In the first instance if you have safeguarding concerns or want to complain about a lack of action on a safeguarding concern, speak to the Nominated Safeguarding Lead. However, if you have continuing concerns, e.g., your concerns are not acted on, you are encouraged to use our Whistleblowing Policy and contact the appropriate authorities (the local safeguarding boards and/or Police). Advice is available from Protect - free confidential advice for people who witnessed wrongdoing in their workplace but are not sure how to raise their concerns (<a href="https://protect-advice.org.uk">https://protect-advice.org.uk</a> 020 3117 2520).</p> <p><b>Service delivery contracts</b> will be checked for safeguarding arrangements of partner organisations.</p> |
| <p><b>7. Communications training and support for staff</b></p> | <p>WATAG commits resources for induction, training of volunteers, effective communications, and support mechanisms in relation to Safeguarding.</p> <p><b>Induction</b> will include an explanation of the need for safeguarding and how this can be achieved.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion of the Safeguarding Policy (and confirmation of understanding)</li> <li>• Discussion of other relevant policies</li> <li>• Ensure familiarity with reporting processes.</li> <li>• Initial training on safeguarding.</li> </ul> <p><b>Training</b><br/> All volunteers who, through their role, are in contact with adults at risk will have access to safeguarding training at an appropriate level. Training will be sourced from various organisation which support voluntary groups e.g. Dorset Community Action, CAN.</p> <p>Refresher training will take place every 3 years.<br/> The Safeguarding Lead will undertake higher-level training<br/> Training records will be kept and maintained</p> <p><b>Communications and discussion of safeguarding issues</b><br/> Communication methods will be developed to ensure effective communication of</p>  |

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|                                  | safeguarding issues and practice.   |
| <b>8. Reporting</b>              | <p>If you are concerned about an adult's welfare:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. and believe they are in immediate danger - call the police and /or an ambulance on 999. Record what took place and the action taken and report to the Nominated Safeguarding Lead / Deputy ASAP.<br/>If not go to 2.</li> <li>2. If the adult has disclosed information, you should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay calm, treat them seriously, offer them support and listen to them but do not probe or conduct a mini investigation.</li> <li>• Write down what they tell you using their own words as soon as possible.</li> <li>• Keep any evidence safe.</li> <li>• Discuss with the adult what they would like done about it,</li> <li>• Seek consent from the adult to take action and to report the concern. Consider whether the adult may lack capacity to make decisions about their own and other people's safety and wellbeing. If you decide to act against their wishes or without their consent, you must record your decision and the reasons for this.</li> <li>• Do not attempt to discuss this with the person alleged to have caused the harm.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>If the adult has given you permission to report it, or you have decided to go against their wishes go to 3.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Discuss with the Nominated Safeguarding Lead / Deputy as soon as possible and within the same working day and decide whether to take further action. If you are unable to discuss with the Nominated Safeguarding Lead / Deputy and believe the concern needs immediate action, then you should undertake the next steps yourself.</li> <li>4. The Nominated Safeguarding Lead / Deputy records concerns using as much information as possible such as what was said, what was observed, when, where and who else was there, date, time, and place of disclosure/concerns.</li> <li>5. The Nominated Safeguarding Lead / Deputy makes the appropriate referral to the Dorset Safeguarding Adults Board (Email: <a href="mailto:DSAB@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk">DSAB@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk</a> Tel: <a href="tel:01305221016">01305 221016</a>) within 24 hours of disclosure or concern raised. This can also be done online using the Dorset Council online safeguarding portal (if applicable)</li> <li>6. Followed up in writing within 48 hours with copy kept in the organisation's secure Safeguarding File (restricted access), which must be kept securely and confidentially.</li> <li>7. If the concern relates to the Safeguarding Lead, it must be reported to the Deputy Safeguarding Lead or directly to Dorset Council.</li> </ol> |
| <b>9. Allegations Management</b> | <p>WATAG recognises its duty to report concerns or allegations against its volunteers within the organisation or by a professional from another organisation. An allegation may relate to a person who works with adults who has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• behaved in a way that has harmed or may have harmed an adult.</li> <li>• behaved towards an adult in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm.</li> </ul>   |

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|  | <p>The process for raising and dealing with allegations is as follows:<br/> First step - Any volunteer from WATAG is required to report any concerns in the first instance to the Nominated Safeguarding Lead / Deputy..<br/> Second step- contact Dorset Social Services for advice.<br/> Third step – follow the advice provided.</p> <p>If the information indicates an identifiable adult with care and support needs is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, then the process in 8 Reporting should be followed.</p> <p>If WATAG removes a volunteer from work with an adult with care and support needs (or would have, had the person not left first) because the person poses a risk of harm to adults, the organisation must make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service if regulated activity is involved. WATAG has a legal duty to refer to the Disclosure and Barring Service where a person is removed from regulated activity due to risk of harm.</p> <p>The Safeguarding Lead must inform the Committee that an allegation has been made (excluding any subject of allegation).</p> <p>Suspension of a volunteer may be considered while investigation of an allegation takes place (this is a neutral act, not a disciplinary finding).</p> |
| <b>10. Monitoring</b>                              | <p>The organisation will monitor the following Safeguarding aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe recruitment practices</li> <li>• Training – register/ record of staff training on adult safeguarding</li> <li>• Monitoring whether concerns are being reported and actioned.</li> <li>• Checking that policies are up to date and relevant.</li> <li>• Reviewing the current reporting procedure in place</li> <li>• Presence and action of Nominated Safeguarding person responsible for Safeguarding is in post.</li> <li>• Annual safeguarding review agenda item at Committee meeting.</li> <li>• Record of number (not detail) of safeguarding concerns raised.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>11. Data Protection and Sharing information</b> | <p>Information will be gathered, recorded, and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR and following policies.</p> <p>All volunteers must be aware that they have a professional duty to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard adults. However, information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only, as judged by the Nominated Safeguarding person based on the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis when it is in the best interest of the individual and especially to protect people with care and support needs.</li> <li>• Confidentiality must not be confused with secrecy.</li> <li>• Informed consent must be obtained, but if this is not possible and other adults are at risk, it may be necessary to override the requirement.</li> <li>• It is inappropriate to give absolute confidentiality in cases where there are concerns about abuse, particularly when other people may be at risk or there is a legal duty to report criminal activity.</li> <li>• Any exchange of information must be in accordance with the Data</li> </ul>  |

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|                                 | <p>Protection Act 2018, the Human Rights Act 1998, and Caldicott Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding records will retained for 6 years unless legal proceedings require longer).</li> </ul> <p>All volunteers must be aware that they cannot promise individuals or their families / carers that they will keep secrets.</p> |
| <b>12. Reviewing the policy</b> | This policy will be reviewed by the WATAG Committee every year and when there are changes in legislation.   |

Version 1.0 – February 2026

Next review date: February 2027

Signed: