

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY STATEMENT



There has been an increasing awareness over recent years that some individuals who want to harm and abuse children will use charitable organisations, such as Riding for the Disabled, as a vehicle to gain access to children.

The Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) fully accepts its legal and moral obligation to protect children in the course of its work and it is our policy to make every reasonable safeguard to protect those who are involved in any aspect of our work.

In pursuit of this, RDA is committed to ensuring that:

- The welfare of children is paramount,
- All children are able to participate in a fun and safe environment,
- All children have the right to protection from physical, sexual and emotional harm and from neglect and bullying,
- All reasonable and practical steps are taken to protect children from harm, discrimination and degrading treatment; respecting children's rights, wishes and feelings,
- All suspicions and allegations of poor practice or abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately,
- All trustees, employees and volunteers have a responsibility to report any concerns with regards to child protection matters. **It is the responsibility of experts to determine whether or not abuse has taken place, but it is *everyone's* responsibility to report any concerns,**
- All Groups appoint a designated trustee or delegated volunteer/employee to be a Group Safeguarding Officer,
- Safeguarding Officers and other relevant staff/volunteers receive appropriate training and guidance on child protection.

As defined in the Children Act 1989, for the purposes of this policy anyone under the age of 18 should be considered a child. All organisations, which provide for children, should be able to demonstrate the existence, implementation and effectiveness of child protection policies.

The policies and procedures apply to everyone within RDA, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, including trustees, committee members and designated medical and veterinary staff. Everyone should be aware of the child protection procedures and best practices and ensure they are implemented.

Legal and Procedural Framework

The practices and procedures within RDA are based on the principles contained within the UK and International legislation and Government guidance taking the following into account:

- Children Act 1989 (England and Wales) & 2004
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995
- Children (Scotland) Act 1995
- The Protection of Children Act 1999
- The Human Rights Act 2000
- Protection of Children (Scotland) Act 2003
- Every Child Matters 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2015)