

Democratic Unionist Party

Safeguarding Policy

Approved by the Officers of the Democratic Unionist Party and Operational from 4th September 2020.

The welfare of children and adults at risk is paramount and it is the responsibility of all staff, members, volunteers, and elected representatives to behave with the highest standards of integrity, maturity and good judgement.

It is the responsibility of all staff, members, volunteers and elected representatives to ensure that their behaviour upholds the standards of this policy, and the party's Code of Conduct, at all times.

Notification

Any breaches of the policy must be reported:

- Staff, members, volunteers and elected representatives can report breaches of the policy using the procedures as set out in the Democratic Unionist Party's Whistleblowing Policy and Procedures;
- Staff, members, volunteers, and elected representatives can report breaches of the policy directly to the Party Officers or Chief Executive who will deal with it in accordance with the steps set out in the Whistleblowing Policy.

Staff, members, volunteers and elected representatives who are found to have breached this policy will be subject to the Democratic Unionist Party's disciplinary procedures.

For members, volunteers and elected representatives breaching this policy such a breach will be considered to be a breach of Democratic Unionist Party rule 19 (a), that is: "No member shall bring the Party into disrepute."

Any breach of the policy involving a volunteer or member of staff from another organisation will result in them being reported to the appropriate safeguarding officer within that organisation.

A referral may be made to a statutory agency i.e. the police and/or the local authority or relevant government department if the behaviour alleged to have breached this policy constitutes a safeguarding allegation.

Abuse of a position of trust

Staff, members and volunteers, including elected representatives, should be aware that they may be seen as role models by children, young people and adults at risk and therefore they must act in an appropriate manner at all times. They must not engage in sexual activity or allow a sexual relationship to develop with any member under the age of eighteen years old.

It is essential that staff, volunteers, members and elected representatives do not:

- Conduct a sexual relationship with a child or have any form of sexual contact with a child involved in Democratic Unionist Party activity. Any such behaviour between an adult member of staff, member, volunteer or elected representative and a child involved in Democratic Unionist Party activity represents the most serious breach of trust on the part of the staff member, party member or volunteer;
- Physically, emotionally or sexually abuse, maltreat or exploit any child or an adult at risk or neglect their basic physical and psychological needs;
- Exaggerate or trivialise child abuse or the abuse of adults at risk;
- Make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to, or in front of, children or discuss adult sexual relationships in front of them;
- Rely on their reputation or that of the Democratic Unionist Party or any elected office that they hold to protect them;
- Give or receive gifts and/or substances such as drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, e-cigarettes to or from a child;
- Encourage or appear to encourage children to drink alcohol or take drugs;
- Allow their judgment to be impaired by alcohol or any other substance when acting in a position of trust.

Definitions

Child: A person under the age of eighteen years old. The fact that a young person has reached the age of sixteen, is living independently, is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or is in custody does not change their entitlement to protection.

Adult at risk: A person aged eighteen years old or over, who is, or may be, in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is, or may be, unable to take care of him themselves, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.

Volunteer: Any person officially engaged in an activity related to the Democratic Unionist Party which involves spending time, unpaid (except for travel and other approved out-of-pocket expenses), doing something which aims to benefit the Democratic Unionist Party.

This term includes:

- Any member of the Democratic Unionist Party elected to local government;
- Any member elected to a role of their Branch or Constituency Association;
- Any member who is a member of the Democratic Unionist Party's Central Executive Committee.