SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK POLICY

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Introduction

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Parker Smith Inclusion acknowledges the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and adults at risk; and is committed to ensuring safeguarding practice that reflects statutory responsibilities, government guidance and complies with best practice requirements. All children and adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.

This policy applies to all internal staff and candidates and will be widely promoted and is mandatory for everyone involved in Parker Smith Inclusion. Failure to comply with this policy and the company's safeguarding procedures may result in disciplinary action being taken, including termination of employment and/or contract.

All candidates placed by Parker Smith Inclusion are expected to familiarise themselves with arrangements for safeguarding children and adults at risk in the organisation where they are placed and to have a clear understanding of abuse and neglect in all forms, including how to identify, respond and report.

Here at Parker Smith Inclusion we expect all staff and candidates to follow and promote good practice in safeguarding. In order to do so, they should:

- Read, understand, accept and act in accordance with this policy.
- Be vigilant and follow professional codes of conduct to maintain professional boundaries and safe working practices.
- Report any concerns or disclosures related to the protection and safety of children and adults at risk.
- Undertake mandatory safeguarding and child protection training and awareness sessions where provided.
- Help to educate learners / service users in placements regarding matters of keeping safe, including acting as a good role model.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our other relevant safeguarding policies, such as:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Allegations Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment
- Whistleblowing policy

Definitions

Child: According to the Children Act 1989, a 'child' is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate for children and young people, does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection under current legislation.

In this policy, the terms 'child' and 'young person', or 'children' and 'young people', are used interchangeably to refer to any individual under the age of 18.

Adult at risk: The Care Act 2014 defines an 'adult at risk' as an adult who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and.
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- 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.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child/adult at risk by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.

Harm: Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm.
The Children Act 1989 defines 'harm' as "ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development". 'Development' means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development; 'health' means physical or mental health; and 'ill-treatment' includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical. As a result of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, the definition of harm also includes "impairment suffered by hearing or seeing the ill-treatment of another"

Abuse may be perpetrated by an individual from the child's school, community, family, those in a position of trust or another child.

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child-on-child abuse). This is most likely to include but may not be limited to: bullying (including cyberbullying), physical abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment, up-skirting, sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (previously referred to as youth-produced sexual imagery) and initiation / hazing type violence and rituals.

Categories of abuse - Children
Child abuse can be one of the following categories as set put in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026:

Abuse: Abuse is a form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear, or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or extra-familial contexts by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.

Domestic Abuse: The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 introduced the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse (section 1 of the Act). The statutory definition is clear that domestic abuse may be a single incident or a course of conduct which can encompass a wide range of abusive behaviours, including a) physical or sexual abuse; b) violent or threatening behaviour; c) controlling or coercive behaviour; d) economic abuse; and e) psychological, emotional, or other abuse.
Under the statutory definition, both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be "personally connected" (as defined in section 2 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021). The definition ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members.
All children can experience and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members, including where those being abusive do not live with the child. Experiencing domestic abuse can have a significant impact on children. Section 3 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children (0 to 18), as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse.
Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of child-on-child abuse is sometimes referred to as teenage relationship abuse. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of domestic abuse (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support.
The 'Domestic Abuse Act 2021: statutory guidance' provides further advice for frontline professionals who have responsibility for safeguarding and supporting victims of domestic abuse, including children. This guidance provides further information about the different forms of domestic abuse (including teenage relationship abuse and child to parent abuse) and the impact of domestic abuse on children.

Physical Abuse: Physical abuse is a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child.

Emotional Abuse: The persistent emotional maltreatment of a child so as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond a child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse: Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect: Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment; or
- provide suitable education.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

For detailed information on the signs which may indicate abuse and neglect, see the latest government guidance on recognising child abuse and neglect.

Categories of abuse - Adults at risk

The categories of adult abuse are set out in the Care Act 2014 and are as follows:

Physical Abuse: including assault, hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint, inappropriate physical sanctions.

Domestic Abuse and coercive control: including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse. It also includes so called "honour" based violence. It can occur between any family members.

Sexual Abuse: including rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, indecent exposure and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Psychological Abuse: including emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyberbullying, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

Financial or Material Abuse: including theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Modern Slavery: encompasses slavery, human trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Traffickers and slave masters use whatever means they have at their disposal to coerce, deceive and force individuals into a life of abuse, servitude and inhumane treatment.

Discriminatory Abuse: discrimination is an abuse which centres on a difference or perceived difference particularly with respect to race, gender or disability or any of the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010.

Organisational Abuse: including neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting such as a hospital or care home, for example, or in relation to care provided in one's own home. This may range from one off

incidents to on-going ill-treatment. It can be through neglect or poor professional practice as a result of the structure, policies, processes and practices within an organisation.

Neglect and Acts of Omission: including ignoring medical, emotional or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Self-neglect: this covers a wide range of behaviour neglecting to care for one's personal hygiene, health or surroundings and includes behaviour such as hoarding.

Emotional or Psychological Abuse: including threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or withdrawal from services or supportive networks. Further information can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-safeguarding-statement-of-government-policy

Our Commitment to Safeguarding
This policy is designed to meet the above principles by ensuring that:

- Parker Smith Inclusion has robust safer recruitment processes that ensure that those who are known to be a risk to children or adults do not gain access to them; those whose actions suggest that they are a risk to children and adults at risk are detected at the earliest stage and prevented from continuing to work with children and adults at risk; and that those who intend to do harm are prevented at every possible stage from entering the workforce.
- Staff and candidates understand their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and are provided with appropriate learning opportunities to recognise, identify and respond to signs of abuse, neglect and other safeguarding concerns relating to children and adults at risk.
- There is an open and transparent culture which enables staff and candidates to raise concerns around children/adults at risk, those that work with children/adults at risk, and processes within Parker Smith Inclusion.
- It is as simple as possible for an individual to report concerns about harm or risk and clear procedures are implemented where safeguarding and child/adult protection issues arise. Where concerns are reported Parker Smith Inclusion will ensure that individuals are supported.
- Parker Smith Inclusion has robust policies and procedures in place, which are reviewed and updated at least every 12 months.
- Parker Smith Inclusion stays up to date with developments on safeguarding best practice, reporting and auditing safeguarding activities annually and addressing any areas for improvement.
- Parker Smith Inclusion will report any concerns regarding any individual, or any potential safeguarding situation that it becomes aware of as soon as practicable to the appropriate authority and will co-operate in any ongoing investigations or assessments.
- Parker Smith Inclusion will work in partnership with other services (including local authority children's and adult social care) to ensure that those who are identified as being at risk of abuse are protected.
- Parker Smith Inclusion will ensure that staff have access to all relevant training that meets local and national safeguarding requirements.

- Confidential, detailed and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored.

The role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is a senior member of staff of Parker Smith Inclusion with the necessary knowledge, experience, and training to take the lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection.

The DSL is the point of contact for anyone in the business who has a safeguarding concern about a child or adult at risk.

The role of the DSL includes:

- Ensuring that all relevant staff and candidates have received appropriate safeguarding and child protection training as part of their induction (including online safety which, amongst other things, includes an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring) appropriate to their role and continue receiving training to enable the development of skills and good practice when working with children/adults at risk.
- Receiving and responding appropriately to all reports of safeguarding issues or abuse which are raised by staff members, partner agencies or candidates.
- Ensuring that confidential, detailed and accurate records are kept of any concerns, reports or referrals related to candidates or children/adults at risk that they work with.
- Liaising with Designated Safeguarding Leads in partner organisations.
- Acting as a source of support, advice and expertise for staff and candidates with concerns and liaising with other agencies and professionals.
- Supporting staff and candidates involved in safeguarding incidents and assisting them in challenging or reporting poor or unsafe practice.
- Referring any allegations of abuse or safeguarding concerns to the relevant children or adult social care and if relevant, the police and/or the Local Authority's Designated Officer (LADO). In order to do this, the DSL will need to consult the Local Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements / Local Safeguarding Adults Board for the area in which the organisation is located. Further details on referral routes are located in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, Care and Support Statutory Guidance 2022, and in Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Reporting concerns to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). This may be where a staff member or candidate has been dismissed or left, where serious concerns have been raised about their conduct or behaviour, and the company believes they pose a risk to children and adults at risk. The DSL will complete the necessary referral documents to the DBS and liaise with them thereafter if they have any further questions regarding the staff member or candidate.
- Keeping senior management appraised of any safeguarding incidents and their outcome.
- Liaising with the Company's Compliance Officer and senior management regarding training and skill development programmes available to staff and candidates.

- Policy development (or overseeing this), including ensuring that all policies are updated as required and, in any event, reviewed at least on an annual basis.

Recruitment and Selection Process

Parker Smith Inclusion is also committed to protecting children and adults at risk through a careful recruitment and selection process (Safer Recruitment), a Whistleblowing Policy and guidance on appropriate behaviour (Code of Conduct). These policies should be read alongside this policy.

Parker Smith Inclusion's rigorous procedures, following APSCo's Compliance+ process ensures that any candidate found to have a history of unacceptable conduct or practice, will not be placed.

Responding to Safeguarding Concerns

All staff have a responsibility to protect children and adults at risk. This includes:

- Observing Parker Smith Inclusion policies and processes including any Code of Conduct
- Attending mandatory safeguarding training, together with any recommended refresher training, and keeping their skills and knowledge concerning safeguarding and safer recruitment up to date
- Reporting any concerns arising from meeting candidates or carrying out pre-placement checks to the DSL without delay and making a clear written record of all relevant information to be passed to the DSL
- Reporting any concerns arising from organisation visits/placements to the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the relevant organisation and confirming that this has been done to Parker Smith Inclusion's DSL
- Taking action, such as following the process detailed in the Whistleblowing Policy where there are concerns about practice.

All candidates working through Parker Smith Inclusion are expected to keep children and adults at risk safe by:

- following the Parker Smith Inclusion policies including the Code of Conduct;
- following the Safeguarding Policy of each placement, including any Code of Conduct;
- making the Designated Safeguarding Lead at the placement aware of any concerns regarding any children/vulnerable adults; or any adults caring for or working with those persons;
- seeking advice and support from Parker Smith Inclusion's DSL when they have reason to believe that their concerns have not been responded to appropriately or they have concerns about practice in the placement;
- carrying out their responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children;
- understanding the importance of sharing information about children, young people and their families in order to safeguard children; and

- following any mandatory induction, which includes familiarisation with child protection responsibilities and the procedures to be followed if anyone has any concerns about a child's safety or welfare.

Dealing with allegations of abuse made against candidates

All candidates placed on assignment are responsible for supporting safe behaviour and have responsibility to follow the guidance laid out in this policy and related policies, such as the Code of Conduct.

In accordance with the Care Act (2014), Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, where an organisation has received an allegation that a volunteer, supply staff, trainee, contractor or member of staff who works with children and adults at risk has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child/adult, or may have harmed a child/adult;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child/adult;
- behaved towards a child/adult in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children and adults at risk; or
- or behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children and adults at risk.

A referral should be sent to the LADO within one working day, giving as much detail as possible.

Details regarding allegations that meet the harms threshold and concerns that do not meet the allegations threshold (referred to as 'low level concerns'), including who will take responsibility for this once a candidate is placed, are set out in Parker Smith Inclusion's Allegation Policy which should be read alongside this policy.

Duty to make a referral to the DBS

Where there is evidence that anyone has harmed, or poses a risk of harm, to a child or adult at risk, there is a legal duty on Parker Smith Inclusion to report that person to the Disclosure and Barring Service using their guidance available here. The DBS has statutory authority to bar a person from working in regulated activity with children and/or adults at risk in the UK.

A referral to the DBS will also be made if the person resigns prior to an investigation being carried out or reaching its conclusion. If the accused person resigns, or ceases to provide their services, this should not prevent an allegation being followed up in accordance with this guidance.

The Parker Smith Inclusion will not make any compromise/settlement agreement in the case of a person deemed unsuitable to work with children/vulnerable adults. Any such agreement which contained a condition of not referring the case to the DBS would constitute a criminal offence.

Anyone who is concerned about a child's or adult at risk's welfare or who believe that a child or adult at risk may be at risk of abuse should pass any information to the DBS or other appropriate authority as soon as possible and no longer than 24 hours after the initial concern.

Whistleblowing
Candidates may find it difficult to raise concerns about colleagues, managers, people in placement or concerning how safeguarding concerns are responded to within a setting. Parker Smith Inclusion has a specific Whistleblowing Policy which encourages candidates to raise concerns and also provides details of outside organisations that candidates can approach for support and advice. Parker Smith Inclusion aims to have an open and honest culture where safeguarding is responded to effectively, and both staff and candidates feel safe, supported and able to voice any concerns that they have in the knowledge that they will be responded to.

Summary

Parker Smith Inclusion will make clients and candidates aware of the Safeguarding Policy through the following means of email.

All staff, temporary workers, candidates and contractors must be aware that they have a professional duty to share information with other recruitment firms in order to safeguard children/adults at risk. The public interest in safeguarding children and adults at risk may override confidentiality interests. However, information will be shared on a need-to-know basis only, as judged by Parker Smith Inclusion.

Appendix

List of relevant legislation and guidance governing this policy

Legislation/ Regulation/ guidance	Web Address
Keeping Children Safe in Education	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2
Children Act 1989	http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents
Care Act 2014	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/23/contents
The Children Act 2004	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/31/contents
Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006/disqualification-under-the-childcare-act-2006
Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1974/53
Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (including the 'Prevent Duty')	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/contents
Modern Slavery Act 2015	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/30/contents
Human Rights Act 1998	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents
Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/31/contents
Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006	https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/contents
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989 (Ratified by the UK in 1992)	https://www.unicef.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/unicef-convention-rights-child-uncrc.pdf
Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65cb4349a7ded0000c79e4e1/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023_-_statutory_guidance.pdf
The Prevent Duty guidance: England and Wales (Home Office).	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance
Care and Support Statutory guidance 2024	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-support-statutory-guidance
Information Sharing: Guidance for practitioners and managers providing safeguarding services 2024 (HM Government).	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66320b06c084007696fca731/Info_sharing_advice_content_May_2024.pdf
Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings (Safer Recruitment Consortium)	https://www.saferrecruitmentconsortium.org/_files/ugd/f576a8_0d079cbe69ea458e9e99fe462e447084.pdf
What to do if you're worried a child is being abused - Guidance (HM Government)	https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a80597640f0b62302692fa1/What_to_do_if_you_re_worried_a_child_is_being_abused.pdf
Local Safeguarding Partners/Arrangements	https://consult.education.gov.uk/child-protection-safeguarding-and-family-law/working-together-to-safeguard-children-revisions-t/supporting_documents/Transitional.pdf

REVIEW DATES	
Author	Sophie Kelly
Version	1
Date	01/09/2023
Author	Keya McKenzie
Version	1.1
Date	06/02/2024
Author	Keya McKenzie
Version	2
	01/08/2024
Author	Keya McKenzie
Version	2.1
Date	03/10/2024
Author	Keya McKenzie
Version	2.2
Date	25/03/2025
Author	Keya McKenzie
Version	3
Director Sign Off	Darragh Ryan
Date	01/09/2025
Author	Keya McKenzie
Version	3
Director Sign Off	Sophie Kelly
Date	15/09/2026