



# Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy & Procedures

*Phoenix Psychology Collective Ltd*

**Last reviewed: March 2025**

**Next review due: March 2026**

## 1. Statement of Commitment

Phoenix Psychology Collective Ltd (PPC) is committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults who come into contact with our service. We recognise our duty of care and the importance of providing a safe, respectful, and supportive environment that promotes wellbeing and protects individuals from harm.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. All PPC staff, contractors, and volunteers share a collective duty to actively prevent abuse and neglect and to respond swiftly and appropriately when concerns arise.

## 2. Scope of this Policy

## PPC - Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure 2025

This policy applies to all PPC employees, practitioners, volunteers, and associates, regardless of employment status. It covers safeguarding responsibilities for work involving:

- Children and young people under 18
- Adults at risk (vulnerable adults)

### 3. Policy Oversight

This policy is adopted by the Managing Director of Phoenix Psychology Collective Ltd, who retains responsibility for its annual review and for ensuring it is implemented consistently across the organisation.

**Signed:** Mike Parsons

**Role:** Managing Director

**Date:** 10 March 2025

**Witnessed by:** Victoria Mullan

**Date:** 10 March 2025

### 4. Definitions

**Safeguarding** is the action taken to promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and protect them from harm.

**Abuse** is any action that causes harm or violates a person's rights or dignity. It may include:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect
- Exploitation

PPC recognises that abuse can occur in any setting and may be perpetrated by someone known or unknown to the individual.

## 5. Recognising Abuse

Signs of abuse can vary widely but may include:

- Injuries such as bruises, burns, or fractures
- Unexplained behavioural changes
- Disclosures or remarks made by the individual or others
- Signs of neglect (poor hygiene, hunger, lack of supervision)
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour or language
- Withdrawal or fearfulness

Staff should remain vigilant and consider the broader context of behaviours, interactions, and physical signs.

## 6. Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

**Mike Parsons** is the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for PPC. All safeguarding concerns must be reported to the DSL immediately.

The DSL is responsible for:

- Making referrals to children's social care or adult safeguarding teams
- Advising and supporting staff in relation to safeguarding matters
- Maintaining confidential records of safeguarding concerns
- Coordinating staff safeguarding training

## 7. Safe Recruitment

PPC follows robust safer recruitment practices. This includes:

- Completion of an application and interview process
- Verification of identity and references
- An enhanced **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** check before starting work

## PPC - Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure 2025

No staff member or volunteer will have unsupervised contact with clients until satisfactory DBS clearance is received. Those waiting for DBS results may shadow or complete induction training but not deliver services.

### 8. Roles and Responsibilities

All staff must:

- Familiarise themselves with this policy
- Attend regular safeguarding training
- Report concerns to the DSL immediately - without delay
- Not investigate allegations themselves
- Maintain appropriate boundaries and follow the Staff Code of Conduct

**Important:** In urgent cases where a child or adult is at immediate risk and the DSL is unavailable, staff must contact the relevant safeguarding authority directly and inform the DSL as soon as possible.

### 9. Confidentiality

All safeguarding concerns are confidential. Information must only be shared:

- On a need-to-know basis
- With relevant authorities and internal leads
- Where the individual's safety, or that of others, may be at risk

Do not promise to keep disclosures secret. Reassure the individual and explain that you may need to share information to keep them safe.

### 10. Responding to Concerns or Disclosures

If a child or vulnerable adult discloses abuse:

- **Listen** carefully without interruption or judgement

## PPC - Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure 2025

- **Remain calm** and non-reactive
- **Reassure** the individual they have done the right thing
- **Do not promise confidentiality**
- **Record** what has been said in the person's own words as soon as possible
- **Report** to the DSL immediately

Complete a **Safeguarding Concern Form** within 5 hours and submit it to the DSL. Opinion must be clearly separated from fact.

### 11. Exceptional Circumstances

In rare cases, a staff member may need to act outside of policy in the immediate best interest of a child or vulnerable adult. If this occurs:

- Consult the DSL or senior staff beforehand where possible
- Record the rationale and actions taken
- Notify the DSL as soon as practicable after the event

### 12. Staff Code of Conduct – Safeguarding Expectations

All staff and volunteers must:

- Treat all individuals with dignity, respect, and equality
- Promote inclusion and consider additional needs
- Never be left alone with a child or vulnerable adult unless essential and risk-assessed
- Never engage in physical punishment or inappropriate physical contact
- Avoid sexually suggestive comments or behaviour—even in jest
- Use appropriate language at all times
- Maintain professional boundaries at all times

Staff must never:

- Drive a child home alone without written permission
- Escort a child to the toilet unsupervised (unless agreed for medical/educational reasons)

## PPC - Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure 2025

- Share personal contact details unless through PPC procedures
- Take photographs or recordings without written consent
- Post identifying information or images on social media

### 13. Health, Safety & Risk Management

- All activities should be appropriately risk-assessed
- Rooms and equipment must be safe and suitable for all participants
- Registers and attendance records should be kept for each session
- Visitors should be checked and accompanied as appropriate

### 14. Photography and Filming

- Consent must be obtained in writing from parents/guardians for photography or filming
- No names should be linked to images in publications or online
- Images must be stored securely and deleted once no longer needed

### 15. Supervision and Collection

- Children must not be left unsupervised
- Children must only be released to authorised individuals
- If a child is to be collected by someone other than the usual guardian, written permission is required

### 16. Additional Guidance and Contacts

This policy works in accordance with:

- **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)**
- **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)**

- **Children Act 1989 / 2004**
- **Care Act 2014 (for adults at risk)**

In case of emergency or if a child is at immediate risk of harm, contact your local authority safeguarding team or the police without delay.

## **Appendix 1:**

### ***Definitions of Child Abuse taken from The Dorset Safeguarding Children Procedures***

Child abuse and neglect is a generic term encompassing all ill treatment of children including serious physical and sexual assaults as well as cases where the standard of care does not adequately support the child's health or development.

Children may be abused or neglected through the infliction of harm, through the failure to act to prevent harm or by the withdrawal of emotional and/or physical nurturance of the child.

Abuse can occur in a family or an institutional or community setting. The perpetrator may or may not be known to the child.

***Working Together to Safeguard Children 1999*** sets out definitions and examples of the four broad categories of abuse which are used for the purposes of registration:

- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse

These categories overlap and an abused child may frequently suffer more than one type of abuse.

## **PHYSICAL ABUSE**

Physical abuse may take many forms e.g. hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating a child.

It may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of, or deliberately causes, ill health to a child. This unusual and potentially dangerous form of abuse is now described as fabricated or induced illness in a child

## **EMOTIONAL ABUSE**

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development, and may involve:

- Conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person.
- Imposing developmentally inappropriate expectations.
- Causing children to feel frightened or in danger - e.g., witnessing domestic violence.
- Exploitation or corruption of children.

Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of children; however, it may sometimes be the only form of abuse identified.

## **SEXUAL ABUSE**

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening and includes penetrative (i.e. vaginal or anal rape or buggery) and non-penetrative acts.

It may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of pornographic materials, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.



## **NEGLECT**

Neglect involves 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 and development.

This may involve failure to provide adequate food, shelter or clothing, failure to protect from physical harm or danger or failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs.

## **Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults – Phoenix Psychology Collective's Code of Conduct**

**All children, young people and vulnerable adults must be treated with equality, dignity and respect. It is expected that any staff member, group or organisation working with children & young people must carry out the following practices as a matter of high importance in all activities:**

### **Organisational Responsibilities:**

1. All groups, volunteer helpers and paid staff are to be given a copy of the Phoenix Psychology Collective Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy. Staff (paid & unpaid) must also follow the Phoenix Psychology Collective Procedures and agree to have a DBS check carried out.
2. No person under the age of 16 years of age should be left in charge of any children of any age. A child or group of children or young people (under 18) must not be left unattended at any time.
3. A register & record of attendance of children or young people attending activities should be kept for each session.

## PPC - Safeguarding Children &amp; Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure 2025

4. Confidentiality about children's, young people and adult's personal information must be practiced. Children/young people and adults have the right to expect that helpers will deal sensitively and sympathetically with their situation. It is important that information is only available to those who 'need to know' it. All volunteers, paid staff and helpers must respect issues of confidentiality.
5. It is important to keep a check on visitors & guests whether their visit is by invitation or unsolicited. This will ensure the welfare of children to be safeguarded at all times.
6. All Health & Safety issues should be considered in the room(s) used. This includes all equipment and substances used and a separate risk assessment should be carried out for all activities and reviewed on a regular basis.
7. Photography, recoding and videoing can only be carried out with the full consent of parents/guardians. If publishing images on a website or newsletter, names must be kept anonymous. Parents, guardians and young people should give specific permission for any images to be put on to a website.

**Staff Responsibilities:**

8. Staff should promote activities that are fun, enjoyable and educational, ensuring fair play and challenge any bullying behaviour.
9. Any allegations or disclosures must be treated seriously and dealt with in line with the Phoenix Psychology Collective Safeguarding Policy.
10. When escorting a child to the toilet, the adult is to wait outside the toilet cubicle with the **outer** door held open. If there is no outer door, then the adult should wait outside

## PPC - Safeguarding Children &amp; Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure 2025

- the closed door. Members of staff should, as part of their supervision of activity areas, check the toilet areas at regular intervals.
11. At no time should any occasional volunteer or helper, who has not yet been DBS cleared, have any contact with children or young people. Furthermore, all staff members (paid or unpaid) should avoid being left alone with any child for any significant period and under **no circumstances drive a child home alone.**
  12. All staff (paid & unpaid) must not involve themselves in rough physical or sexually provocative games and are to avoid inappropriate or intrusive touching of any kind and are to control and discipline without physical punishment.
  13. All staff (paid & unpaid) must not use any foul or abusive language and never make sexually suggestive comments, even in fun.
  14. The child, young person or vulnerable adult should always be told why his/her behaviour is not acceptable and the reasons for applying a particular sanction. You must ensure that parents/carers are fully informed and support whatever sanction is applied.
  15. Parents/Carers should always be immediately informed if staff or volunteers have had to do things of a personal nature for a child or vulnerable adult, such as changing clothing. An incident report should be completed by the member of staff. All staff need to be aware of correct first aid procedures to follow where an incident requires immediate attention.
  16. Individuals with additional needs should always be considered when running events and activities, this includes the adapting of equipment and activities appropriate to their individual needs.
  17. Under no circumstances should any child or young person with prior arrangements for being collected by a parent/guardian, be left alone at the end of any session. Staff

## PPC - Safeguarding Children &amp; Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure 2025

should be aware of the designated person responsible for collecting a child and if this is not the usual parent or guardian then written permission must be given by the parent.