Safeguarding Adults and Children Policy

Policy Created: February 2026

Last Reviewed:

Next Review: February 2027 (or sooner if significant changes in legislation, guidance, or organisational activities occur)

Reviewed by:

Responsible Officer: CEO

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Approved by: CEO

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Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Lynn James-Jenkinson (or nominated deputy)

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Contact (Lancashire): 0300 123 6720 / Out of hours: 0300 123 6722

1. Introduction and Commitment

Pathways Associates CIC is a disabled-led Community Interest Company dedicated to enabling people with learning disabilities, autistic people, and their families to live the lives they choose as equals in their local communities.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We are committed to protecting all adults and children from abuse, neglect, harm, exploitation, or discrimination in any form. This includes physical, sexual, emotional, financial, discriminatory, institutional, self-neglect, modern slavery, domestic abuse, and online harm.

Our approach is trauma-informed, strengths-based, and co-produced with Experts by Experience and families. It prioritises empowerment, dignity, and the right to live free from harm while supporting choice, independence, and positive risk-taking.

This policy aligns with current best practice:

- Care Act 2014 (adults) and statutory guidance
- Children Act 1989/2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998
- PSIRF (Patient Safety Incident Response Framework)
- CQC, UKHSA, and Local Safeguarding Adults/Children Board guidance

It integrates our existing policies: Patient Safety Incident Response Plan/Policy, Duty of Candour, Complaints, Freedom to Speak Up, Health and Safety, Co-production, Equality and Diversity, Information Governance and Data Protection, and Infection Control.

It reflects our values:

- **Led by lived experience** — Experts by Experience and families shape safeguarding processes
- **Partnership** — We collaborate with families, advocates, NHS, police, and local authorities

- **Inclusion and respect** — Accessible, culturally sensitive, non-discriminatory practices
- **Innovation** — Creative, proportionate solutions that avoid barriers for disabled people
- **Integrity** — Transparent, accountable, no-blame culture that encourages reporting

We commit to a Just and Learning Culture where concerns are reported without fear, incidents are reviewed systemically, and learning leads to improvement.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Pathways Associates CIC activities where we engage with or support adults and children, including:

- Expert Hub, Self Advocates Training Partnership, and co-production networks
- Training, events, workshops, and Care and Treatment Reviews (CTRs)
- Policy, strategy, and capability development support
- Remote, hybrid, or in-person interactions
- Any contact with vulnerable adults/children through our work

It covers:

- Adults at risk (18+ with care/support needs)
- Children and young people (under 18)
- Colleagues, staff, associates, volunteers, Experts by Experience, partners, contractors, visitors, and families

We do not provide direct clinical care, but our staff, Experts by Experience, and independent clinicians interact with disabled people during CTRs and events.

3. Key Objectives

We aim to:

- Prevent abuse and neglect through robust recruitment, training, and risk assessments
- Identify and respond promptly to concerns with compassion and without delay
- Support victims/survivors and those affected, involving them in decisions
- Investigate fairly, learn systemically, and improve practice
- Comply with legal duties (reporting to LADO, police, CQC, UKHSA, local authorities)
- Foster a safe, inclusive culture where everyone feels confident to speak up

4. Core Principles

Our safeguarding is guided by the six statutory principles (Care Act 2014):

- Empowerment — Presume capacity; support informed choice and consent
- Prevention — Act before harm occurs
- Proportionality — Least intrusive response appropriate to risk
- Protection — Provide support and representation for those at greatest risk
- Partnership — Work with individuals, families, and agencies
- Accountability — Be transparent and document decisions

Additional principles:

- Trauma-informed and person-centred
- Co-production with Experts by Experience
- Accessibility (easy-read, advocates, interpreters, British Sign Language)
- No-blame learning culture (links to Freedom to Speak Up and Duty of Candour)
- Equality and intersectionality (protected characteristics, health inequalities)

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Board of Directors**
  - Strategic oversight and accountability
  - Review incidents/themes quarterly
  - Ensure resources and annual reporting in CIC34
- **CEO**
  - Overall responsibility for compliance
  - Appoint DSL and ensure training/resources
  - Lead serious case reviews and external notifications
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**
  - Day-to-day management of concerns
  - Advise, investigate proportionately, and coordinate responses
  - Liaise with LADO, police, CQC, local authorities, and ICBs
  - Maintain secure safeguarding records
- **All Colleagues, Associates, Volunteers, Experts by Experience**
  - Recognise, respond, record, and report concerns immediately
  - Complete mandatory training
  - Support those affected and cooperate with enquiries
- **Managers/Event Leads**
  - Risk assess activities
  - Ensure safe recruitment (DBS, references)
  - Promote speaking up and monitor practice

External referrals:

- Adults: Local authority Adult Social Care
- Children: Local authority Children's Social Care / LADO (Lancashire: 0300 123 6720)
- Urgent risk: Police 999 / 101
- Regulated activities: CQC

6. Procedures

We follow a clear "Recognise – Respond – Record – Report – Review" process.

- **Recognise**
  - Be alert to signs of abuse/neglect (physical, emotional, sexual, financial, discriminatory, organisational, self-neglect, domestic abuse, modern slavery, online harm)
  - Consider capacity and vulnerability
- **Respond**
  - Ensure immediate safety
  - Listen without leading questions; reassure without promising secrecy
  - Offer trauma-informed support and advocacy
- **Record**
  - Use secure, factual records (date, time, what was said/seen)
  - Store in restricted safeguarding files
- **Report**
  - Internal: To DSL within 24 hours (or immediately if urgent)
  - External: To local authority within 24 hours; police if crime; CQC if regulated
  - Use multi-agency strategy meetings where appropriate
- **Review and Learn**
  - Proportionate review (systems-based, no-blame)
  - Develop action plans; co-produce learning with Experts by Experience
  - Share anonymised lessons via Quality Improvement and Board reports

Links:

- Patient Safety incidents → Patient Safety Incident Response Policy
- Concerns about practice → Freedom to Speak Up / Complaints
- Data issues → Information Governance Policy
- Health risks → Infection Control / Health and Safety policies

7. Training, Awareness, and Support

We commit to:

- Mandatory annual safeguarding training for all (adults + children, accessible formats, including MCA, trauma-informed practice)
- Role-specific training for DSL and event leads

- Induction for new joiners, Experts by Experience, and contractors
- Awareness via meetings, resources, and co-produced materials
- Wellbeing support for those affected or reporting (counselling, debriefs, advocacy)

8. Monitoring, Review, and Continuous Improvement

- Policy reviewed annually or after incidents/legislative changes
- Safeguarding activity monitored quarterly by Board (themes, training compliance, referrals)
- Learning co-produced with Experts by Experience and families
- Feedback welcomed via surveys and speaking up channels
- Annual anonymised summary in CIC34 report

9. Conclusion

Pathways Associates CIC is dedicated to safeguarding that protects, empowers, and includes. By preventing harm, responding compassionately, and learning together through co-production, we uphold our disabled-led values and create safer environments for people with learning disabilities, autistic people, children, and their families.

Key Contacts

- DSL: Lynn James-Jenkinson:
- LADO (Lancashire): 0300 123 6720
- Police (urgent): 999 / non-urgent 101
- CQC: 03000 616161
- NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000
- Adult Social Care (local): 0300 123 6720 or out of hours 0300 123 6722

This policy is available in easy-read and alternative formats on request.