

Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy

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1. Introduction

Safeguarding is a fundamental responsibility of Param Qualifications. This policy sets out how Param Qualifications ensures that children and adults at risk are protected from abuse, harm, neglect, exploitation and radicalisation. It establishes expectations for staff, contractors, Delivery Centres and any individual acting on behalf of Param.

Safeguarding is understood not only as responding to harm but as actively preventing it through clear systems, defined responsibilities, safe recruitment practices, and structured reporting procedures.

This policy aligns with the statutory safeguarding framework in England and Wales and reflects the organisation's commitment to act lawfully, proportionately and in the best interests of individuals who may be vulnerable.

1.1 Scope of Policy

This policy applies to:

- All employees of Param Qualifications
- Consultants, contractors and individuals engaged by Param
- Delivery Centres approved to deliver Param qualifications
- Any individual acting in a professional capacity on behalf of Param

While Delivery Centres hold direct responsibility for day-to-day learner interaction, Param retains oversight responsibility to ensure that appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place within its operational network. This policy covers:

- Safeguarding of children (under 18 years)
- Safeguarding of adults at risk
- Safer recruitment practices
- Reporting and escalation procedures
- Information sharing and confidentiality
- Governance and monitoring

1.2 Commitment

Param Qualifications is committed to:

- Promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk

- Ensuring safeguarding concerns are taken seriously and acted upon
- Maintaining safe recruitment and vetting practices
- Providing clear reporting routes for safeguarding concerns
- Supporting individuals who raise concerns in good faith
- Cooperating with statutory authorities where required

Param recognises that safeguarding responsibilities extend beyond compliance. The organisation expects all staff and Delivery Centres to maintain vigilance and to respond appropriately where concerns arise.

2. Definitions

This section provides clarity on key safeguarding terms used within this policy. Definitions are aligned with statutory guidance to ensure consistency with national safeguarding expectations.

2.1 Children

For the purposes of this policy, a child is defined as any individual under the age of 18 years. Children may be vulnerable to abuse, neglect, exploitation, or radicalisation. Safeguarding children involves protecting them from maltreatment, preventing impairment of health or development, and ensuring that they grow up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care.

2.2 Adults at Risk

An adult at risk is defined in line with the Care Act 2014 as a person aged 18 or over who:

- Has care and support needs;
- Is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect;
- Is unable to protect themselves from that abuse or neglect because of their care and support needs.

Adults at risk may include individuals with physical disabilities, learning difficulties, mental health conditions, or other vulnerabilities that increase their exposure to harm.

2.3 Regulated Activity

Regulated activity refers to specific types of work involving close and unsupervised contact with children or adults at risk that require enhanced background checks under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

Param's employs staff and contractors who may engage with Delivery Centres, assessment processes or quality assurance activities. Where roles involve regulated activity, appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks must be undertaken. Safer recruitment and vetting processes are therefore a key safeguarding control.

2.4 The Prevent Duty

Under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, organisations have a duty to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism. This responsibility is commonly referred to as the Prevent Duty.

Safeguarding includes protecting individuals from radicalisation and extremist influence. Delivery Centres are expected to implement Prevent strategies within their local safeguarding framework, and Param retains oversight responsibility to ensure that such measures are embedded within centre approval and monitoring processes.

2.5 Categories of Abuse

Safeguarding requires a clear understanding of abuse types. The main categories include:

- **Physical Abuse** – The use of physical force that results in injury, pain or impairment. This may include hitting, shaking, restraining, or inappropriate physical punishment.
- **Emotional Abuse** – Persistent emotional maltreatment that causes severe and adverse effects on a person's emotional development. This may include humiliation, intimidation, bullying, or coercive control.
- **Sexual Abuse** – Forcing or enticing an individual to participate in sexual activities, whether or not the person is aware of what is happening.
- **Neglect** – The persistent failure to meet basic physical or psychological needs, resulting in harm to health or development.

Additional safeguarding concerns may include financial abuse, discriminatory abuse, domestic abuse, modern slavery, exploitation, and radicalisation.

Understanding these categories enables individuals to recognise warning signs and respond appropriately.

3. Legislative Framework

Safeguarding arrangements within Param Qualifications are informed by the statutory safeguarding framework in England and Wales. Param operates within an educational and assessment context where safeguarding obligations apply through governance oversight and centre approval arrangements.

The organisation recognises that safeguarding responsibilities are grounded in legislation designed to protect children and adults at risk. This policy therefore reflects relevant statutory duties and national safeguarding guidance.

3.1 Key Legislation

Param Qualifications operates in alignment with key safeguarding legislation, including but not limited to:

- The Children Act 1989 and 2004
- The Care Act 2014
- The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)
- The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

These legislative instruments establish the framework for protecting children and adults at risk from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation. They also define responsibilities in relation to safer recruitment, information sharing, and cooperation with statutory authorities.

Delivery Centres approved by Param Qualifications are expected to operate in compliance with these statutory obligations and to maintain safeguarding procedures that align with local safeguarding partnership guidance.

3.2 Delivery Centre Safeguarding Responsibilities

While Delivery Centres are responsible for day-to-day learner welfare, Param Qualifications retains oversight responsibility to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are robust and effective. Delivery Centres must:

- Maintain an up-to-date safeguarding policy
- Appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Implement appropriate safer recruitment and vetting controls
- Ensure staff receive safeguarding awareness training
- Establish a clear internal reporting pathway for safeguarding concerns
- Comply with Prevent Duty requirements

Param will review safeguarding arrangements as part of its centre approval and monitoring processes. Where deficiencies are identified, corrective action may be required. Safeguarding responsibilities therefore operate at two levels: operational responsibility within Delivery Centres and governance oversight by Param Qualifications.

4. Safeguarding Governance and Oversight

Safeguarding within Param Qualifications is supported by a defined governance structure designed to ensure accountability, clarity of responsibility and appropriate oversight. Safeguarding remains a governance priority due to its oversight role across approved Delivery Centres.

Safeguarding oversight is embedded within organisational leadership arrangements and is monitored through defined roles and reporting lines.

4.1 Governance Structure

Param Qualifications maintains a safeguarding oversight framework led by a designated senior representative responsible for safeguarding governance. The safeguarding governance structure includes:

- A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- A Deputy Safeguarding Lead (where required)
- Senior management oversight
- Defined reporting pathways to organisational leadership

This structure ensures that safeguarding concerns are not managed informally but are handled through a clear and accountable route.

4.2 Safeguarding Responsibilities

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- Acting as the central point of contact for safeguarding concerns
- Receiving and recording safeguarding disclosures
- Assessing risk and determining appropriate next steps
- Liaising with Delivery Centres where concerns arise
- Referring matters to statutory authorities where required
- Maintaining confidential safeguarding records
- Providing safeguarding guidance to staff

All staff working for or on behalf of Param share responsibility for safeguarding awareness and must report concerns promptly to the DSL. Delivery Centres are responsible for maintaining their own Designated Safeguarding Lead and internal safeguarding procedures.

4.3 Governance Oversight and Accountability

Safeguarding oversight forms part of Param's governance monitoring framework. Safeguarding matters may be reviewed through:

- Centre monitoring activities
- Risk management processes
- Incident review procedures
- Periodic policy review

Where safeguarding concerns present systemic risks, these may be escalated to senior management for further action. The organisation maintains a clear distinction between operational safeguarding management at centre level and governance oversight at organisational level.

4.4 Designated Safeguarding Lead

Param Qualifications will formally appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead with appropriate competence and authority to carry out safeguarding responsibilities.

The DSL must:

- Demonstrate understanding of statutory safeguarding obligations
- Maintain confidentiality and impartiality

- Ensure accurate record keeping
- Maintain awareness of safeguarding developments

In the absence of the DSL, safeguarding responsibilities will transfer to an appointed Deputy.

5. Safer Recruitment and Vetting Controls

Param Qualifications recognises that safeguarding begins with the recruitment and engagement of suitable individuals. Safer recruitment practices are designed to reduce the risk of harm by ensuring that individuals engaged by Param are suitable to carry out their responsibilities. Recruitment decisions are therefore informed not only by professional competence but also by integrity, conduct history and, where appropriate, disclosure information.

Recruitment processes include verification of identity, confirmation of professional qualifications where relevant, and assessment of employment history. Where roles involve regulated activity or potential direct contact with children or adults at risk, appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks will be undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements.

Param recognises that safeguarding legislation does not prohibit the employment of individuals with previous convictions. However, any disclosed criminal history will be assessed carefully and proportionately, taking into account:

- The nature and seriousness of the offence
- The relevance of the offence to the role
- The time elapsed since the offence
- Evidence of rehabilitation

Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, balancing safeguarding responsibilities with fairness and equality principles under the Equality Act 2010.

5.1 Disclosure Requirements

Individuals engaged by Param Qualifications may be required to complete a disclosure declaration confirming whether they have any unspent convictions, cautions or relevant safeguarding concerns. This declaration forms part of safeguarding due diligence and must be completed honestly and in full.

Where a role meets the statutory definition of regulated activity, enhanced DBS clearance will be required prior to appointment. Failure to disclose relevant information may result in withdrawal of appointment or termination of engagement.

Disclosure information will be handled confidentially and in accordance with data protection requirements.

5.2 Professional Conduct Expectations

All individuals working for or on behalf of Param Qualifications are expected to maintain professional standards of behaviour that safeguard the welfare of learners and protect the integrity of the organisation.

Professional conduct includes:

- Maintaining appropriate professional boundaries
- Avoiding any form of inappropriate physical or verbal interaction
- Refraining from discriminatory, abusive or exploitative behaviour
- Reporting safeguarding concerns promptly
- Acting in a manner that upholds trust and integrity

These expectations are reinforced through contractual terms and internal guidance. Breaches of professional conduct standards may result in disciplinary action.

5.3 Ongoing Safeguarding Assurance

Safeguarding suitability is not limited to the point of recruitment. Individuals are expected to inform Param Qualifications if circumstances change in a way that may affect their suitability to undertake their role.

Param may review safeguarding arrangements periodically to ensure continued compliance with statutory obligations and internal safeguarding standards.

6. Reporting and Managing Safeguarding Concerns

Param Qualifications recognises that safeguarding concerns may arise unexpectedly and must be managed in a calm, structured and legally appropriate manner. A safeguarding

concern may include suspicion of abuse, disclosure by an individual, observation of concerning behaviour, or information received from a third party.

All safeguarding concerns must be treated seriously. Individuals must not attempt to investigate allegations themselves. The role of staff is to recognise, record and report concerns through the defined safeguarding pathway.

6.1 Initial Response to a Safeguarding Concern

Where a safeguarding concern arises, the immediate priority is to ensure that the individual is safe and not exposed to further harm. If a child or adult at risk is in immediate danger, emergency services must be contacted without delay.

When receiving a disclosure:

- The individual should be listened to calmly and respectfully.
- No leading questions should be asked.
- Promises of confidentiality must not be made.
- The information should be recorded as soon as possible in factual terms.

Staff must avoid forming personal conclusions or attempting to resolve the matter independently.

6.2 Step-by-Step Reporting Procedure

Param Qualifications maintains a defined reporting pathway to ensure that safeguarding concerns are handled consistently and transparently.

Step 1 – Recognise

Identify signs of potential abuse, neglect, exploitation, or radicalisation. This may include physical indicators, behavioural changes, verbal disclosures, or third-party information.

Step 2 – Record

Document the concern promptly, including dates, times, factual observations and any direct statements made. Records must remain objective and free from interpretation.

Step 3 – Report

Report the concern immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). If the concern relates to a Delivery Centre, the Centre's Safeguarding Lead should also be informed where appropriate.

Step 4 – Assess

The DSL will review the information, consider risk level, and determine whether referral to external authorities is required.

Step 5 – Escalate

Where statutory thresholds are met, the DSL will refer the matter to the appropriate local authority safeguarding team, the police, or other relevant body.

Step 6 – Record and Monitor

All safeguarding concerns will be securely recorded and monitored until resolution. This structured process ensures consistency, accountability and compliance with safeguarding legislation.

6.3 Further Action and Escalation

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for determining appropriate action based on the nature and severity of the concern. This may include:

- Seeking advice from local safeguarding authorities
- Making a formal referral
- Informing senior management
- Implementing interim protective measures

Param Qualifications recognises that safeguarding decisions must be proportionate and guided by statutory safeguarding thresholds.

6.4 Allegations Against Staff

If an allegation of abuse is made against a member of staff, contractor or representative of Param Qualifications, the matter will be handled with seriousness and impartiality.

The individual concerned may be temporarily relieved of duties pending investigation, depending on the nature of the allegation. The DSL will determine whether the allegation

meets the threshold for referral to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) or other relevant authority.

Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process, and both the complainant and the individual subject to the allegation will be treated fairly and respectfully.

6.5 Information Sharing and Confidentiality

Safeguarding information is sensitive and must be handled carefully. However, confidentiality cannot override the duty to protect children and adults at risk.

Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with data protection legislation. Where risk of harm is identified, relevant information may be shared with statutory authorities without consent if necessary to protect the individual. Accurate record keeping supports transparency and accountability.

6.6 Support for Individuals Involved

Param Qualifications recognises that safeguarding incidents can be distressing for all parties involved. Appropriate support will be offered where possible, including guidance, referral to support services, or signposting to specialist agencies.

The organisation also acknowledges the importance of supporting staff who report concerns in good faith.

6.7 Safeguarding Reporting Flow Diagram

A safeguarding flow diagram is included in the Appendix to provide a visual representation of the reporting pathway outlined above. This supports clarity for staff and Delivery Centres and reinforces the defined step-by-step method.

6.8 Implementation and Review

This policy will be implemented through organisational communication, governance oversight and centre monitoring processes. Safeguarding procedures will be reviewed periodically to ensure continued alignment with statutory guidance and operational effectiveness.

Lessons learned from safeguarding incidents may inform policy updates or procedural improvements.

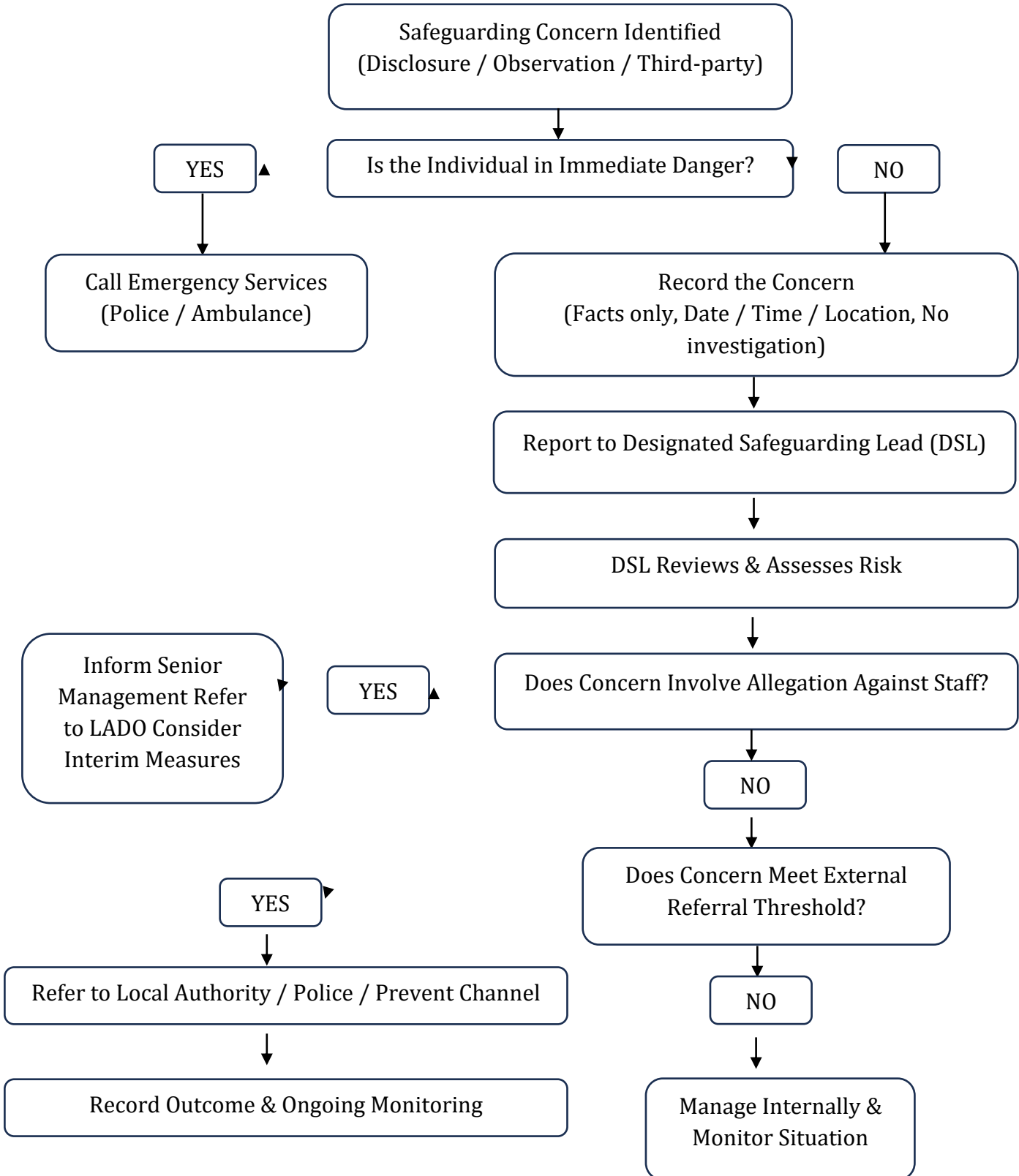
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7. Annexes

Annex A - Safeguarding Reporting Flow Diagram

Annex B - Safeguarding Disclosure Declaration Form

7.1 Annex A - Safeguarding Reporting Flow Diagram



7.2 Annex B - Safeguarding Disclosure Declaration Form

This declaration forms part of Param Qualifications' safeguarding and safer recruitment procedures.

Full Name:

Position Applied For / Held:

Department / Function:

Date:

1. Criminal Convictions

Do you have any unspent criminal convictions, cautions, reprimands or final warnings that are not protected by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide details:

2. Safeguarding Investigations

Have you ever been subject to:

- A safeguarding investigation
- Disciplinary action relating to safeguarding
- Professional misconduct proceedings
- Inclusion on a barred list

Yes

No

If yes, please provide details:

3. Ongoing Proceedings

Are you currently subject to any investigation or pending proceedings that may affect your suitability to work in a safeguarding-sensitive environment?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide details:

Declaration

I confirm that the information provided in this declaration is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that failure to disclose relevant information may result in withdrawal of appointment or termination of engagement.

I understand that this information will be handled confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation.

Signature: _____

Date: _____