



PINK SKILLS

Safeguarding Policy

Keeping Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Safe

Purpose of Policy

This policy outlines Pink Skills commitment to ensure that every person who comes through our doors, joins one of our programmes or works with any of our mentors, will be safe, respected and looked after.

We work with various people, who may be going through really difficult times. Some are young people under or over the age of 18 and some are adults who are vulnerable in ways that are not always visible. Whatever their situation, they deserve to be treated with care, dignity and compassion.

Everyone has a role to play in safeguarding, and we adopt the principle that safeguarding is "everyone's responsibility" across all aspects of our provision.

The big promise

Pink Skills has zero tolerance for abuse, harm or neglect of any kind. Every single person who works with us shares this commitment. Safeguarding is not one person's job. It belongs to all of us.

Scope of Policy

This policy covers safeguarding for two groups of people:

- **Children and young people, meaning anyone under the age of 18. Some university students start their course at 16 or 17. Some programmes may involve younger visitors. Whoever they are, if they are under 18, this part of the policy applies.**
- **Vulnerable adults, meaning anyone who is 18 or over and who has care or support needs that make them less able to protect themselves from harm or abuse. This might include someone experiencing poor mental health, a learning disability, substance dependency, domestic abuse or severe financial hardship.**

You do not need a formal diagnosis or label to be considered vulnerable. If someone is struggling and that struggle makes them less able to keep themselves safe, we take that seriously.

This policy also applies to everyone who works with or for Pink Skills, including full-time staff, part-time staff, freelance facilitators, coaches, mentors, MENTOR programme trainees doing supervised sessions, volunteers, and any external professionals we bring in.

What Safeguarding Actually Means

Safeguarding is the action we take to promote the welfare of people and protect them from harm. It is not just about responding when something goes wrong. It is about creating an environment where harm is less likely to happen in the first place.

For Pink Skills, safeguarding means:

- Making sure everyone is safe in our sessions and interactions
- Noticing when something does not seem right and doing something about it
- Treating people with dignity, respect and fairness
- Listening to people and believing them when they tell us something has happened
- Knowing how to report a concern and actually doing it
- Working alongside the university and local authorities when needed

The Six Principles We Work By

The Care Act 2014 gives us six principles that should guide all safeguarding work. We have written them below in plain English because they matter and they should mean something to you, not just sit in a document.

Empowerment

People have the right to make their own choices. We will always ask someone what they want before taking action about a concern. We will never just do things to or about someone without including them wherever it is safe to do so. Safeguarding is not something we do to people. It is something we do with them.

Prevention

The best outcome is that nothing bad happens in the first place. We will make sure everyone who joins our programmes knows what abuse looks like, knows their rights, and knows how to get help. We will also make sure our own staff and mentors understand the signs to look out for before they start working with anyone.

Proportionality

We will always respond in a way that fits the situation. Not every concern needs a full referral to the police. Not every disclosure leads to the same response. We will think carefully about what the right action is and take the least intrusive approach that keeps the person safe.

Protection

When someone is at serious risk and cannot protect themselves, we will step in. We will support people to report abuse if they want to, and in some cases we will report concerns ourselves even if they have not asked us to, because sometimes keeping someone safe matters more than keeping things quiet.

Partnership

We do not work in isolation. We will work with the university, local authorities, NHS services and other organisations to keep people safe. We will share information when we need to, respecting confidentiality where we can and breaking it where we must.

Accountability

We are responsible for what we do and what we fail to do. If something goes wrong, we will own it, learn from it and make sure it does not happen again. Everyone in Pink Skills knows their responsibilities and we are transparent about how we operate.

What Abuse Looks Like

Abuse can happen in many forms. It can be obvious, or it can be subtle. It can come from a stranger, a partner, a family member or even someone in a position of authority. Here is what to watch out for:

Physical abuse

Hitting, slapping, pushing, burning, over-medicating someone, or restraining them in a way that hurts. Signs might include unexplained injuries, flinching, or wearing long sleeves in warm weather to cover marks.

Emotional or psychological abuse

Being threatened, humiliated, controlled, isolated, or constantly criticised. This kind of abuse is often invisible but can be just as damaging as physical harm. Signs might include someone seeming very anxious, withdrawn, or talking about themselves in a very negative way.

Sexual abuse

Any sexual contact or behaviour that someone has not consented to, including unwanted touching, sharing sexual images without permission, or sexual coercion. Consent must be freely given and can be withdrawn at any time.

Financial abuse

Someone taking money, pressuring a person about their finances, controlling their spending, or exploiting them financially. Students can be particularly vulnerable to this, especially if they are already struggling.

Neglect

Failing to provide someone with the care they need. This could be a carer not providing food or medication, or a person neglecting their own basic needs to the point of serious harm.

Discriminatory abuse

Abuse that is linked to someone's identity, whether their race, disability, age, gender, sexuality, religion or any other characteristic. This includes slurs, harassment, and being treated worse because of who you are.

Domestic abuse

Abuse by a partner, ex-partner or family member. This includes not just physical violence but also coercive control, financial abuse, threats and emotional manipulation. Domestic abuse affects students too. Do not assume it does not happen to the people we work with.

Modern slavery

Being forced to work or live in conditions that amount to exploitation. This includes trafficking, forced labour and domestic servitude. Signs might include someone seeming fearful, not being in control of their own documents or money, or appearing to be monitored by another person.

Self-neglect

When someone stops taking care of their own health, hygiene or living environment to a degree that puts them at serious risk. This is different from someone simply having a messy room. It is when things have got to a point where their safety is genuinely at risk.

Online abuse

Cyberbullying, unwanted sexual contact online, being manipulated or groomed through digital platforms, or having personal content shared without consent. This is just as serious as face to face abuse and we take it equally seriously.

Safeguarding Children and Young People Specifically

A child is anyone under the age of 18. While most people in our programmes will be adults, some students begin university at 16 or 17. We may also engage with younger people through outreach or partner events. Wherever a young person under 18 is involved, the following applies in addition to everything else in this policy.

Position of trust

If you coach, teach, train, supervise or mentor a young person under 18, you are in a position of trust. This is a legal term. Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, as updated by the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, any sexual relationship between someone in a position of trust and a young person in their care is a criminal offence. This applies even if the young person appears to consent. There are no exceptions.

One-to-one sessions with under-18s

One-to-one sessions with anyone under 18 must always take place in a visible, open space or via an approved digital platform. A third party must always be aware the session is taking place. Sessions must never happen in private, closed rooms or via personal messaging apps.

Parental or guardian consent

Before anyone under 18 participates in any part of the programme, we must have written consent from their parent or guardian. This includes consent for any photographs, recordings or case study content involving them.

No personal contact

No Pink Skills representative should contact a young person under 18 via personal social media, personal phone number or personal messaging apps. All contact must go through official Pink Skills or school, college or university channels.

Signs of abuse in young people

Children and young people may not always tell you directly if something is wrong. Signs to watch out for include:

- Unexplained changes in behaviour or mood
- Becoming withdrawn, anxious or clingy
- Talking about feeling worthless or like they are a burden
- Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour
- Unexplained injuries or flinching at physical contact
- Being accompanied everywhere by an adult who does not give them space
- Signs of not eating properly, not sleeping, or not having access to basic necessities

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Specifically

An adult at risk is someone who is 18 or over and who has care and support needs that mean they may not be able to protect themselves from abuse or neglect. Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities have a legal duty to make enquiries when they think someone may be at risk.

At Pink Skills, the students and participants we work with through the ARISE arm of the programme may include people experiencing significant mental health challenges, financial hardship, isolation, domestic abuse or other circumstances that make them vulnerable. We do not need a formal label or diagnosis to treat someone with the care and attention their situation deserves.

Capacity and consent

Everyone has the right to make their own decisions. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 says that capacity should always be assumed unless there is evidence to the contrary, that people have the right to make decisions others might consider unwise, and that any support we give should be the least restrictive option available. If you are ever unsure whether someone has the capacity to consent to something, speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead straight away.

What vulnerable adults might experience

The same forms of abuse listed in the previous section apply to adults. Some additional signs to look out for in adults include:

- Talking about a partner, family member or carer in a way that suggests fear or control
- Appearing confused, disoriented or not aware of their surroundings
- Seeming very dependent on another person who is present in sessions

- Mentioning money problems that seem to have been caused by someone else
- Disclosing thoughts of self-harm or suicide
- Significant deterioration in self-care, hygiene or general presentation

What to Do If You Are Concerned

If you see, hear or sense something that makes you think a person might be at risk of harm, here is exactly what you should do. Please read this carefully and keep it somewhere you can find it.

If someone is in immediate danger, call 999 first. Everything else can wait.

For all other concerns, follow these steps:

1. Stay calm and do not panic. Your calm presence will help the person feel safe.
2. If someone is telling you something, listen without interrupting. Use open questions like "can you tell me more about that?" Do not lead them or suggest answers.
3. Do not promise to keep it secret. You can say: "I want to help you and I may need to share what you have told me with someone who can help, but I will keep it as private as possible."
4. Do not try to investigate yourself or confront anyone you think might be responsible for the harm.
5. As soon as you can, write down what happened, what was said, and when. Use the person's own words as much as possible. Note the date and time.
6. Contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as soon as possible and within the same working day. If the DSL is not available, contact the Deputy DSL or most senior Pink Skills person you can reach.
7. The DSL will take it from there. They will decide what action to take, which may include contacting the university, local authority, police or other services.

Key contacts

Pink Skills Designated Safeguarding Lead: safeguarding@pinkskills.co.uk

Nottingham Adults Safeguarding: 0115 876 1000

Nottingham Children's Social Care: 0115 876 4800

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

Samaritans: 116 123 (free, 24 hours a day)

Confidentiality and When We Have to Break It

We take confidentiality seriously. Everything shared in a mentoring or coaching session is treated with real care and discretion. We will not gossip, we will not share things unnecessarily, and we will always treat personal information with respect.

But confidentiality has limits. There are situations where keeping something quiet would put someone at risk, and in those situations the safety of the person has to come first. We will always try to tell the person that we need to share information before we do it, unless telling them would put them or someone else in greater danger.

We will share information without asking for consent when:

- Someone's life is at risk, including their own
- A child or vulnerable adult is in danger of serious harm
- A serious crime has been committed or is about to be
- We are legally required to share the information

In every other situation, we will talk to the person first, explain what we need to share and why, and get their agreement where possible. Sharing information is always done thoughtfully, not carelessly.

Recording and Storing Information

Any time you report a safeguarding concern or take action because of one, a record needs to be made. This is not about bureaucracy. It is about making sure there is a clear trail of what happened, what was done and what the outcome was. Good records protect the person who has been harmed and protect you too.

All safeguarding records are stored securely and are only accessible to the DSL, the Deputy DSL and senior leadership. They are never shared with other programme participants or university staff unless there is a specific need. Records are kept for a minimum of seven years.

When writing a safeguarding record:

- Write what you saw, heard or were told, not your interpretation of it
- Use the person's own words in inverted commas where possible

- Include the date, time and location
- Note who else was present
- Sign and date the record

Training

Everyone who works with Pink Skills must complete safeguarding training before they start working directly with participants. This is not optional.

- All staff and facilitators complete a minimum of Level 2 safeguarding training
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead holds a minimum of Level 3 safeguarding training
- MENTOR programme students undertaking supervised peer mentoring complete safeguarding awareness training as part of their module
- Training is refreshed every two years or sooner if there are significant changes to legislation or guidance

If you are unsure whether your training is up to date, please ask the DSL. We would rather have an extra conversation than have someone working with participants without the right knowledge.

Safer Recruitment

Safeguarding starts before anyone even walks through the door. We take care to recruit the right people, and that means checking that everyone who works with participants is who they say they are and does not pose a risk.

- All staff and facilitators who work directly with participants must have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, including checks against both the Children's Barred List and the Adults' Barred List
- MENTOR trainees who do supervised peer mentoring sessions with participants will also be required to hold an enhanced DBS check before their supervised sessions begin
- DBS checks are renewed every three years
- References are always obtained and verified before anyone begins working with participants
- All new staff complete a safeguarding induction before their first session

If someone's DBS check comes back with something on it, we will consider it carefully on a case by case basis. Having a conviction does not automatically rule someone out, but we will always put the safety of participants first.

Mental Health, Self-Harm and Suicide

This is an area we take very seriously at Pink Skills, particularly because most of our projects are specifically designed to support people who are struggling. Some of the people we work with may be in real distress, and we want everyone to feel confident and prepared to respond.

If someone discloses thoughts of self-harm or suicide during a session:

8. Stay calm. Your reaction matters. A calm, caring response can make a real difference.
9. Do not panic or immediately walk away to make a call. Stay with them.
10. Ask directly and without fear: "Are you having thoughts of hurting yourself?" or "Are you thinking about ending your life?" Asking this question does not plant the idea. It opens the door.
11. Listen without judgement. You do not need to have all the answers.
12. Do not leave someone alone if you believe they are at immediate risk. Get help.
13. Contact the DSL as soon as it is safe to do so.
14. Signpost to appropriate support, including the university counselling service, Samaritans (116 123), or PAPYRUS (0800 068 4141 for under-35s).

You are not expected to be a therapist. You are expected to be human, to listen, to care and to get the right help. That is enough.

Online Safety

Online abuse and harm are just as real as anything that happens in person. As a programme that may involve online or blended delivery, Pink Skills takes digital safety seriously.

- All online sessions are conducted through approved, secure platforms only
- No one to one sessions with young people under the age of 18 are conducted via personal messaging apps or personal video call accounts
- All participants are reminded at the start of online sessions that recordings will be made with their consent
- If a Pink Skills representative becomes aware that a participant is posting content on social media that suggests they are at risk, such as posts about self-harm, isolation or suicidal thoughts, this is treated as a safeguarding concern and reported to the DSL
- Staff and mentors do not connect with participants on personal social media accounts

Where This Policy Connects to Others

Safeguarding does not stand alone. It connects directly with other Pink Skills policies and it is worth knowing where the crossover is.

- **Data Protection Policy:** All safeguarding records are treated as sensitive personal data and stored in line with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Records are kept for seven years minimum. The duty to share information in a safeguarding emergency overrides data protection, but decisions about sharing are always made carefully and recorded.
- **Confidentiality:** The limits of confidentiality are the same as the limits in this policy. When safety is at risk, confidentiality gives way. This is made clear to all participants at the start of the programme.
- **Code of Conduct:** The Code of Conduct sets out the professional behaviours expected of all Pink Skills representatives. Breaches of that code, such as developing inappropriate relationships with participants, will be treated as safeguarding concerns and dealt with accordingly.
- **Whistleblowing:** If you have a concern about how Pink Skills itself, or a member of its staff, is handling a safeguarding matter, you can raise this via the Whistleblowing Policy without fear of retaliation.
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion:** Abuse is often linked to inequality and discrimination. Our Equality Policy and this Safeguarding Policy work together to ensure every person is protected and respected, regardless of their background or identity.

Reviewing and Updating This Policy

This policy is reviewed every year by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and senior leadership. It is also reviewed sooner if there are changes in legislation, guidance, or if a safeguarding incident reveals something we need to do differently.

Every version is dated and version-numbered. If you are ever unsure whether you have the latest version, check with the DSL.

This policy is version 1.0, effective from March 2026.

Next review: April 2027.

Questions? Contact info@pinkskills.co.uk