



Actaccessible - Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (Including Adults at Risk)

Actaccessible is fully committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children, young people, and vulnerable adults with whom we work. We believe that everyone, regardless of age, ability or disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, has the right to protection from harm, abuse, and exploitation. Our safeguarding approach is holistic, proactive, and integrated into every aspect of our work.

Legal Framework

Safeguarding is everyone's legal and moral responsibility.

The Children Act 1989 and 2004, as well as the Care Act 2014, place a statutory duty on all individuals and organisations to ensure the welfare of children and adults at risk.

Actaccessible expects all staff, freelancers, volunteers, trustees, and collaborators to remain vigilant and proactive. Failing to act on concerns, or assuming someone else will, may result in preventable harm.

- Our safeguarding policy is based on the following legislation and guidance:
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)
- The Care Act (2014)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Data Protection Act (2018)
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Actaccessible has appointed a Designated Safeguarding Lead, Joanne Henry, and a Deputy DSL, Robert Scott Henry, to ensure safeguarding responsibilities are fulfilled. The DSLs are trained and responsible for the following:

- Acting as the main point of contact for safeguarding concerns

- Coordinating safeguarding actions and maintaining safeguarding records
- Liaising with statutory authorities and, where appropriate, the board of trustees
- Ensuring all personnel understand their duties and receive appropriate safeguarding training
- Reviewing policies and procedures annually or when legislation changes

Definitions

Child

A child is defined as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently, is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, or is in hospital or custody does not change their status or entitlement to protection under safeguarding law.

Adult at Risk (formerly referred to as a Vulnerable Adult)

An adult at risk is someone aged 18 or over who:

- has care and support needs (whether or not those needs are being met),
- is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, and
- as a result of those care and support needs, is unable to protect themselves from the risk or experience of abuse or neglect.

This may include, but is not limited to, adults with learning disabilities, mental health conditions, physical or sensory impairments, cognitive impairments, or those experiencing temporary vulnerability due to illness, trauma, or social isolation.

Child Abuse

Child abuse is any form of physical, emotional, sexual mistreatment, or neglect of a child that results in actual or potential harm to their health, development, or dignity. It can occur in any setting, including within the family, institution, or community.

Types of Abuse (Applicable to both Children and Adults at Risk)

Physical Abuse

The intentional infliction of pain or injury. This may include hitting, slapping, pushing, kicking, misuse of medication, restraint, or inappropriate sanctions.

Emotional or Psychological Abuse

The persistent emotional maltreatment of a person. This can include threats, humiliation, verbal abuse, intimidation, blaming, controlling behaviour, coercion, harassment, or isolating someone from others.

Sexual Abuse

Involves forcing or enticing someone to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. This includes rape, sexual assault, indecent exposure,

sexual harassment, and involving someone in the production or viewing of sexual materials.

Neglect and Acts of Omission

The persistent failure to meet a child or adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs. It includes ignoring medical, emotional, or physical care needs, withholding assistance, or failing to provide access to appropriate services.

Financial or Material Abuse

Includes theft, fraud, exploitation, misuse of property, possessions or benefits, coercion in relation to financial affairs or wills.

Discriminatory Abuse

Abuse based on race, gender, age, disability, religion or belief, cultural background, sexual orientation, or any other form of identity. It can include verbal abuse, unequal treatment, harassment, or hate crimes.

Organisational (Institutional) Abuse

Neglect or poor professional practice as a result of structure, policies, processes, or culture within an organisation. This may involve lack of person-centred care, abusive regimes, improper use of restraints, or disrespectful treatment.

Self-Neglect

When someone neglects to care for their own health, hygiene, or surroundings, to the extent that it threatens their wellbeing. This includes hoarding, failing to seek medical help, or living in unsafe conditions.

Modern Slavery

The exploitation of people through coercion, threats or deception. It includes human trafficking, forced labour, domestic servitude, sexual exploitation, and debt bondage.

Domestic Violence and Abuse

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading, or violent behaviour between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members. It can include physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse, and so-called 'honour'-based violence.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

A form of child abuse and violence against women and girls. It involves the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons. FGM is illegal in the UK and must be reported to authorities if identified.

Indicators of Abuse

Recognising the signs of abuse is critical to safeguarding. Abuse may present in many ways and can be physical, behavioural, emotional, or even subtle changes in attitude or engagement. No single indicator is conclusive on its own, but a combination of signs — or a change in someone's usual behaviour — may raise concern.

All staff, freelancers, and volunteers at Actaccessible are expected to remain alert to these indicators and report concerns promptly, even if they are unsure whether abuse is taking place. It is not your role to investigate, but it is your duty to pass on concerns.

General Signs of Abuse (Children or Adults at Risk)

- Sudden changes in behaviour or mood (withdrawal, aggression, anxiety, fearfulness)
 - Frequent absences or lateness without explanation
 - Reluctance to be left alone with a particular person
 - Disclosure of abuse (spoken, written, drawn, or acted out)
 - Fearful responses to touch, closeness, or authority figures
 - Signs of confusion, disorientation, or inconsistent stories
 - Inappropriate sexual knowledge or behaviour for age/stage
 - Visible injuries or marks (bruises, burns, scratches) in various stages of healing
 - Deterioration in appearance, hygiene, or clothing
 - Self-harm, substance misuse, or eating disorders
-

Specific Indicators by Type of Abuse

Physical Abuse

- Unexplained injuries (bruises, burns, bite marks, fractures)
- Injuries in unlikely places or shapes (e.g. handprints, belt marks)
- Reluctance to explain or inconsistent explanations for injuries
- Wearing long sleeves in warm weather to cover marks
- Flinching or fear of physical contact

Emotional or Psychological Abuse

- Low self-esteem, depression, or excessive need for approval
- Sudden loss of confidence or engagement
- Over-compliance or fearfulness, especially around specific individuals
- Difficulty forming healthy relationships or trusting others

Sexual Abuse

- Sexualised behaviour, play, drawings, or language
- Fear of specific people or places
- Bruising or bleeding in intimate areas
- Avoidance of changing clothes in communal areas
- Regressive behaviours (e.g. bedwetting, thumb-sucking in older children)

Neglect (Including Self-Neglect in Adults)

- Constant hunger or tiredness
- Poor hygiene, dirty clothes, untreated medical conditions
- Repeated nappy rash, infections, or skin conditions
- Hoarding or unsafe living conditions
- Unexplained failure to attend medical or therapy appointments

Financial Abuse (Adults at Risk)

- Sudden lack of money or possessions
- Unpaid bills or unexplained debt
- Reluctance to speak about financial matters
- Loss of financial independence

Discriminatory Abuse

- Isolation or exclusion based on identity
- Derogatory language used toward the individual
- Bullying or harassment, especially around race, disability, gender, religion or sexual orientation

Organisational Abuse

- Rigid routines or lack of personal choice
- Lack of dignity, privacy, or independence in a group setting
- Authoritarian language or punitive discipline
- Unexplained fear of group leaders or facilitators

Modern Slavery

- Signs of malnutrition, exhaustion, or fear
- Lack of freedom (e.g. no access to phone or ID)
- Being accompanied everywhere, unable to speak freely
- Working long hours with little or no pay

Domestic Abuse

- Injuries with unlikely explanations
- Constant checking-in with or fear of a partner or family member
- Isolating behaviours — cutting off contact with others
- Expressions of shame, fear, or helplessness

FGM (Female Genital Mutilation)

- Difficulty walking or sitting
 - Extended absence from school or sessions, followed by discomfort on return
 - Reluctance to undergo medical exams or use toilets
 - Disclosure or hints about a “special procedure” or upcoming “holiday abroad”
-

Important Note:

Abuse may be carried out by adults or by other children or young people (peer-on-peer abuse). It may also happen in person or online. Always take concerns seriously, no matter how minor they may seem, and follow Actcessible’s safeguarding procedures.

Photographing Children

No photos will be taken or published of any child attending an event or activity unless prior written permission is sought from a person with parental responsibility. If any persons has concerns regarding any person taking photos at an event or activity, that person should contact the organisation immediately.

Responding to Accidents, Misunderstandings or Incidents

Actcessible recognises that accidents, misunderstandings, or minor incidents may occur during rehearsals, performances, workshops, or events. These may not meet the threshold for a safeguarding referral but still require appropriate handling, documentation, and follow-up.

1. Immediate Response & Reporting

Any member of staff, volunteer, or freelancer who witnesses or is informed of an accident, misunderstanding, or notable incident must:

- Ensure the immediate safety and wellbeing of all involved.
- Provide appropriate first aid or support if needed.
- Report the incident on the same day to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), **Joanne Henry**, or to a senior staff member if she is unavailable.
- If a serious risk is identified (e.g. physical injury, emotional distress, possible abuse), act without delay and escalate as a safeguarding concern.

2. Incident Documentation

The person reporting must complete an **Incident Report Form** within 24 hours, including:

- Date, time, and exact location
- Names of those involved
- A factual account of what occurred
- Immediate actions taken
- Names of any witnesses

The form must be submitted to **Joanne Henry** and stored securely in accordance with Actcessible's data protection policy.

3. Review and Parent/Carer Communication

Joanne Henry or a designated senior leader will:

- Review the report promptly (within 48 hours)
- Decide whether further action is needed
- Inform the child's parent or carer where appropriate, in a timely and respectful manner
- Offer restorative conversations where needed to resolve misunderstandings or distress

If a concern is repeated, serious, or suggests a pattern, it will be treated as a safeguarding issue.

4. Serious Incident Reporting

If the incident meets the Charity Commission's criteria for a *serious incident* (e.g. abuse, criminal activity, significant harm, data breach), **Joanne Henry** will work with the **Artistic Director, Robert Scott Henry**, and the **Chair of Trustees, James Dean**, to:

- Escalate the concern internally
- Make a Serious Incident Report to the Charity Commission within 48 hours of trustee awareness
- Ensure all necessary safeguarding or regulatory bodies are informed

5. Record Keeping and Review

All reports are kept securely for at least 10 years. Joanne Henry and senior leaders review records regularly to:

- Monitor for patterns
- Update risk assessments

- Improve practice and training

A summary of incident data (without personal details) is shared annually with the Board of Trustees to support good governance and oversight.

Safer Recruitment and DBS Checks

We are committed to safer recruitment practices. All employees, volunteers, trustees, and freelancers who will have direct or unsupervised contact with children, young people, or vulnerable adults must:

- Undergo an Enhanced DBS check before starting work
- Renew their Enhanced DBS check annually
- Register for the DBS Update Service where possible
- Receive induction training on safeguarding before commencing their role

Records of DBS checks are securely stored and monitored by the DSL. Individuals without an up-to-date DBS check will not be permitted to undertake work that involves contact with children or vulnerable adults.

Training and Awareness

All individuals working or volunteering with Actcessible will receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role. Training will include:

- Recognising the signs of abuse and neglect
- Responding appropriately to disclosures and concerns
- Internal reporting procedures
- Online safety and professional boundaries
- Equality, diversity, and inclusion in safeguarding
- Safeguarding training will be refreshed annually and form part of mandatory induction for all new team members.

Recognising and Responding to Concerns

Abuse may present in many forms, including physical, emotional, sexual, neglect, exploitation, or discrimination. Anyone working or volunteering with Actcessible has a duty to take action if they witness, suspect, or are informed of abuse or harm.

Types of Abuse (Definitions)

Physical Abuse: Hitting, slapping, shaking, burning, misuse of medication, or any other physical harm.

Emotional Abuse: Persistent emotional maltreatment, including threats, humiliation, or rejection.

Sexual Abuse: Forcing or enticing someone to take part in sexual activity, including grooming, harassment, or inappropriate contact.

Neglect: Persistent failure to meet basic physical or emotional needs, including food, warmth, hygiene, or supervision.

Exploitation: Taking advantage of a child or young person for personal or financial gain, including trafficking or child labour.

Discriminatory Abuse: Harassment, insults, or unfair treatment based on race, gender, disability, religion, or identity.

Optional additional categories to be recognised and reported:

- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM):** A form of child abuse and gender-based violence. It is illegal in the UK and must be reported.
- **Domestic Abuse:** Violence or controlling behaviour between family members or intimate partners.
- **Modern Slavery:** Coercion, forced labour, or trafficking.
- **Organisational Abuse:** Poor practice or neglect within an institution or group.
- **Self-Neglect:** A person's failure to care for themselves in a way that threatens their wellbeing.
- **Peer-on-Peer Abuse:** Abuse by one child or young person towards another, including bullying and sexual harassment.
- **Online Abuse:** Grooming, bullying, exploitation, or exposure to harmful content via digital platforms.

What to Do if a Team Member Has a Safeguarding Concern

1. **Ensure Immediate Safety:** If someone is in danger or seriously hurt, call emergency services (999).
2. **Report Immediately to the DSL:** Contact **Joanne Henry**, Designated Safeguarding Lead.
3. **Complete a Safeguarding Concern Form** within 24 hours and submit it securely to the DSL.

What to Do if a Child or Young Person Makes a Disclosure

If a child or young person tells you they are being abused or are at risk:

- Stay calm — avoid shock or disbelief
 - Listen carefully and allow them to speak freely
 - Take what they say seriously
 - Do not promise to keep secrets — explain you must share it with someone who can help
 - Reassure them that telling you was the right thing to do
 - Explain what will happen next and who you must report it to
 - Write down exactly what was said, using their own words wherever possible
 - Sign, date, and time your notes
 - Report immediately to **Joanne Henry (DSL)** and submit a Safeguarding Concern Form within 24 hours
-

If the DSL Is Unavailable

- Report directly to the **most senior available employee**, who will assume responsibility for the concern
 - If no staff are available (e.g. at an outreach event), you must contact the child's local **Children's Social Care** directly
 - If there is immediate danger or injury, call **999** without delay
-

Referral Procedure to Children's Social Services

When a concern meets the threshold for referral, the following process applies:

- 1. Initial Assessment**
 - The DSL (Joanne Henry) or a senior staff member will assess the concern as soon as possible, and **always within 24 hours**
- 2. Making the Referral**
 - A referral is made to **Local Authority Children's Social Care** by phone or secure email
 - The DSL will provide:
 - Full details of the child/young person
 - Summary of the concern
 - Any immediate actions taken
 - Copy of the Safeguarding Concern Form
- 3. Record Keeping**
 - A written log of the referral is maintained, including:
 - Date/time of contact
 - Name of person spoken to
 - Advice received
 - Any agreed next steps
- 4. Follow-Up**
 - If no response is received within **3 working days**, the DSL will follow up

- If no action is taken, the DSL may escalate the concern or seek advice from the **Safeguarding Trustee, Kyle Illsley**

5. **Parental/Carer Involvement**

- Where appropriate and safe, parents/carers will be informed
- If this may put the child at greater risk, this step will be omitted in line with local safeguarding advice

Referral Procedure to Adult's Social Services

When a safeguarding concern relates to an **adult at risk**, Actcessible will follow the procedures set out in the *Care Act 2014* and associated statutory guidance. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), Joanne Henry, will coordinate the referral process as follows:

1. Initial Assessment

- The DSL will assess the concern promptly and always within **24 hours** of receiving the information.
- The assessment will consider the adult's **capacity to consent**, any immediate **risk of harm**, and whether the concern meets the **threshold for statutory intervention**.
- Where the adult has capacity and does not want the concern to be referred, this decision will be respected unless others are at risk or a serious crime has been committed.

2. Making the Referral

- If the concern meets the threshold, the DSL will contact the relevant **Adult Social Services Safeguarding Team** via phone or secure email.
- The referral will include:
 - Full name, date of birth, and address of the adult at risk
 - Details of the concern and any immediate actions taken
 - Whether the adult has consented to the referral (or reason for overriding consent)
 - Any additional support needs (e.g. communication, accessibility, advocacy)

3. Record Keeping

- A written record of the referral will be maintained, including:
 - Date and time of contact
 - Name and role of the person spoken to
 - Summary of discussion and advice received
 - Any agreed actions and next steps

4. Follow-Up

- The DSL will follow up within **3 working days** to confirm that action has been taken and to clarify any further support needed.
- If no response is received or the concern is not acted upon, the DSL may escalate the matter through safeguarding channels or seek advice from the Safeguarding Trustee, Kyle Illsley.

5. Confidentiality and Involvement of the Adult at Risk

- Wherever possible, adults at risk will be involved in decisions about their care and protection.
- The adult will be informed of the referral unless doing so would place them or others at increased risk.

Governance Oversight

- The **Designated Safeguarding Lead** is **Joanne Henry**
- The **Safeguarding Trustee** is **Kyle Illsley**
- The **Chair of Trustees** is **James Dean**
- The **Artistic Director** is **Robert Scott Henry**

All safeguarding reports, referrals, and follow-ups are reviewed by the DSL and reported to the Safeguarding Trustee and Chair of Trustees at regular intervals. A serious incident will be escalated to the Charity Commission where required.

Suspension Pending Investigation

Actcessible takes all allegations of abuse, misconduct, or harm involving staff, volunteers, or freelancers extremely seriously. The safety and wellbeing of children, young people, and adults at risk involved in our activities will always be our highest priority.

Immediate Protective Action

If an allegation or concern is made about a staff member, volunteer, or freelancer:

- They will be **immediately removed from the project or setting** where children, young people, or adults at risk are present.
- This action is taken as a **neutral safeguarding precaution**, not a judgement of guilt, and helps to ensure that all individuals involved feel safe while the matter is addressed.

Suspension Decision

- Actcessible may formally **suspend** the individual from active duties if their continued presence poses a potential risk or may compromise the integrity of the investigation.
- This decision will be made by the **Designated Safeguarding Lead, Joanne Henry**, in consultation with the **Safeguarding Trustee, Kyle Illsley**, and the **Chair of Trustees, James Dean**.
- The charity will make an informed decision based on the **balance of probabilities** — i.e. whether it is more likely than not that the allegation could be true — using the information available at the time.
- The **welfare of children, young people, and adults at risk** involved in Actcessible activities will always be treated as paramount.

Referral and Investigation

Actcessible takes all allegations of abuse, misconduct, or harm involving staff, volunteers, or freelancers extremely seriously. All concerns will be responded to swiftly, fairly, and in line with statutory duties and internal procedures. The following types of investigation may take place in response to an allegation:

1. Criminal Investigation

Conducted by the **police** when a criminal offence is suspected (e.g. assault, sexual offences, exploitation). Actcessible will cooperate fully with police enquiries. Any internal action will be coordinated to avoid compromising police procedures.

2. Child or Adult Protection Investigation

Carried out by **Children's Social Care** or **Adult Social Services**, often in partnership with the police, when a child or adult at risk is considered to have suffered, or is at risk of, significant harm. This statutory investigation takes precedence over any internal inquiry.

3. Disciplinary Investigation

Led by **Actcessible** where the concern may involve a breach of policy, code of conduct, or safeguarding responsibilities. This may run in parallel with external investigations but will be paused if requested by statutory agencies until their processes are complete.

- Where appropriate, the allegation will be reported to the **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)** or Adult Safeguarding Board, and all statutory guidance will be followed.
- The individual will be informed of the allegation and the steps being taken, consistent with confidentiality and data protection rules.

- Suspension is a temporary measure pending investigation; it does not imply misconduct or disciplinary sanction unless an outcome confirms this.

Alternative to Suspension

- Where safe and appropriate, Actaccessible may consider alternatives to full suspension, such as:
 - Changes to duties or responsibilities
 - Increased supervision
 - Temporary reassignment to tasks that do not involve contact with children or adults at risk

Confidentiality and Support

- All parties involved in the allegation will be treated with **confidentiality, fairness, and respect** throughout.
- **Support will be made available** to both the individual facing the allegation and any child, young person, or adult at risk affected by it.

Outcomes and Further Action

- If the allegation is **substantiated**, Actaccessible may proceed with disciplinary action, which could include termination of the role or contract, and a referral to:
 - The **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)**
 - Relevant professional bodies
 - The **Charity Commission** as part of a serious incident report
- If the allegation is **unsubstantiated or proven false**, the individual may return to their role, and Actaccessible will take steps to support their reintegration and wellbeing, including restoring their reputation wherever appropriate.

Online Safety

We recognise the risks associated with online interaction and are committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults in digital spaces. Our approach includes:

- Using only official channels for communication
- Gaining consent from parents/guardians before any online engagement
- Supervising all virtual workshops and communications
- Prohibiting private messaging via personal accounts
- Training staff on best practices for digital safeguarding

Any online safeguarding incidents will be handled using the same procedures as face-to-face concerns.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

All safeguarding information will be treated with sensitivity and confidentiality. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. The DSL is responsible for:

- Ensuring all safeguarding records are kept securely
- Deciding when to share information with statutory services
- Informing the data subject where appropriate, unless doing so would place them at further risk

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the DSL and the Board of Trustees. Lessons learned from safeguarding incidents, changes in legislation, or new best practices will prompt interim reviews.

Safeguarding will also be a standing item in staff meetings, trustee reviews, and partner collaborations.

Safeguarding Contact Details

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Joanne Henry

Email: safeguarding@actaccessible.co.uk

Phone: 01283 702640

Deputy DSL: Robbie Henry robbie@actaccessible.co.uk

Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Contacts – East & West Midlands

If an allegation is made against a staff member, volunteer, or freelancer, Actaccessible will contact the relevant Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) based on the area in which the incident occurred or where the individual works. This is in addition to internal reporting to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Joanne Henry), the Safeguarding Trustee (Kyle Illsley), and the Chair of Trustees (James Dean).

Local Authority	Phone	Email / Notes
Derby City	01332 642 376	cpmduty@derby.gov.uk
Derbyshire County	01629 533 190	Professional.Allegations@derbyshire.gov.uk
Nottingham City	—	LADO@nottinghamcity.gov.uk (online referral form required)
Nottinghamshire County	0115 977 3921 / 0115 804 1272	LADO@nottsc.gov.uk
Leicester City	0116 454 2440	Lado-allegations-referrals@leicester.gov.uk
Leicestershire County	0116 305 4141 / 0116 305 0005 (OOH)	CFS-LADO@leics.gov.uk
Rutland County	01572 758 454	—
Coventry City	024 7678 8555 / 024 7683 2222 (OOH)	lado@coventry.gov.uk
Birmingham City	0121 303 8454	Contact: Carol Douch / Elaine Webster

Sandwell — sandwell_lado@sandwellchildrenstrust.org

Walsall 0300 111 8007 May be redirected via Staffordshire LADO

**Staffordshire
County** 0300 111 8007 Referral form available online

Note:

- Always call the relevant LADO as the first step and follow up with the appropriate referral documentation.
- In emergencies, dial **999**.

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

This document was adopted by the Accessible Board of Trustees on: 28/07/2025

To be reviewed annually or as needed.

Signed (Trustee):  _____

Name: James Michael Dean

Date: 28/07/2025