



## Safeguarding policy and procedures

<b>Title of policy:</b>  QAA Safeguarding Policy and Procedures	
<b>Policy statement (summary of main points):</b>  <p>QAA staff may encounter safeguarding concerns and, as QAA is a charity, it is obliged to have in place suitable policies and procedures in place surrounding safeguarding to protect vulnerable individuals including children from harm.</p> <p>All our staff and those working in review teams have a duty to familiarise themselves with the provider's local arrangements for safeguarding and how to report any child or adult protection concerns they are made aware of.</p>	
<b>Strategic aim of the policy:</b>  <p>As QAA is a charity, it is required to have a safeguarding policy which applies to its employees and is obliged to have suitable procedures in place surrounding safeguarding. QAA does not have any express legislative safeguarding responsibilities. The quality assurance and review activities being undertaken by QAA do not amount to a "regulated activity" in the context of children or vulnerable adults under any of the four nations. This policy outlines the responsibilities on those employed by QAA and the procedures for escalation of concerns.</p>	
<b>Links to other policies, procedures and guidelines:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment Policy</li> <li>• Disciplinary Procedure</li> <li>• Comments, Compliments and Complaints Procedure</li> <li>• Data Protection Policy</li> <li>• Freedom to Speak Up policy</li> <li>• Information Retention Policy</li> <li>• Information &amp; Records Management Policy</li> </ul>	
<b>Owned by:</b> Executive Director of Corporate Affairs	<b>Version:</b> 1
<b>Approved by:</b> QAA Board	<b>Date:</b> 11 June 2025

<b>Last reviewed/updated</b>	<b>Date:</b> [Date of last review]
<b>Next review due:</b>	<b>Date: June 2027</b>
<b>For further information, contact:</b>	<a href="mailto:Governance@qaa.ac.uk">Governance@qaa.ac.uk</a>

## Introduction

QAA uses definitions of the term ‘safeguarding’ from statutory guidance. QAA does not have any express legislative safeguarding responsibilities or undertake regulated activity and is not statutorily required to have its own reporting in line with statutory guidance. However, its work means that QAA staff may encounter safeguarding concerns and, as QAA is a charity, it is obliged to have in place suitable policies and procedures surrounding safeguarding.

## Purpose

This policy sets out QAA’s approach to safeguarding and promoting the safety and welfare of children and adults at risk of harm. It outlines QAA’s legal responsibilities in respect of safeguarding, and the obligations on anyone employed by QAA.

Where QAA is reviewing safeguarding arrangements, the responsibilities are set out in the method handbook.

## Scope

The policy applies to all staff, reviewers, assessors, visitors or anyone employed by QAA, and to QAA Board members. All QAA staff are responsible for ensuring compliance with relevant safeguards in the course of their work. A breach of a provider’s policy or QAA’s could be a reportable incident to Charities Commission and/or the Information Commissioners Office.

## Roles and Responsibilities

In relation to safeguarding, specific responsibilities are as follows:

The Board:

- A duty to meet the specific requirements that charities should follow. This includes having a good governance structure in place which enables QAA to safeguard and protect people from harm who come into contact with the charity, which includes:
  - those who benefit from its work;
  - staff; and
  - other people who come into contact with the charity through its work.
- Have oversight of this policy and its aims and objectives;

Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL):

- A source of advice and guidance for staff who have concerns after they have followed the provider’s policies and procedures, ensuring confidentiality or correct reporting has been followed and supporting liaison with a provider where necessary
- Staying up to date with training to provide advice and guidance

Managers (line managers and/or the QAA managers that lead on areas of work) are responsible for:

- ensuring that QAA colleagues are aware and understand their obligations as outlined in this policy
- consulting with the Designated Safeguarding Lead regarding concerns, where needed.

Staff, Reviewers, Assessors and Visitors:

- ensuring they are aware of their role and fulfil their obligations as outlined in this policy.

## Policy statement

No one working for QAA should investigate concerns about individual children or vulnerable adults who are or may be being abused or who are at risk. However, this does not mean that we should do nothing when we become aware of a concern.

QAA does not at present carry out regulated activity, and does not have legal obligations for recording concerns or providing training in handling safeguarding disclosures. However, it does expect staff to follow good practice to ensure that review teams are made aware of the safeguarding policy of the provider where they are completing quality assurance activities, including how to report safeguarding concerns to the provider (by way of appropriate channels). Following the report of a safeguarding concern to a provider, it is the responsibility of the provider through their safeguarding policies and procedures to investigate and manage the concern in accordance with their legal obligations.

All our staff and those engaged in review activities have a duty to familiarise themselves with the provider's local arrangements for safeguarding and how to report any child or adult protection concerns they are made aware of:

### **Acting on safeguarding concerns - Procedure to follow in the event of alleged or suspected abuse**

1. If anyone is concerned that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of being abused or neglected, they should not ignore their suspicions and should not assume that someone else will take action to protect that person.
2. During review activity in either college or university setting, review team members may receive an allegation of abuse or may see something of concern for themselves.
3. All concerns must be taken seriously. It is the responsibility of any QAA colleague acting on safeguarding concerns to inform the institution immediately using their safeguarding reporting procedures ensuring sensitivity and confidentiality'
4. Any guidance about follow up with relevant authorities in the event of a serious concern coming to light, or about confidentiality or information sharing rules must be strictly adhered to.
5. If anyone working for QAA is in any doubt about what to do, they should consult their line manager or QAA Officer for guidance on process and adhering to requirements for not sharing the disclosure beyond the reporting procedures being followed, while also maintaining any confidentiality necessary. The line manager or QAA Officer must also adhere to these procedures if they too are seeking help.

6. Anyone working for QAA who has concerns or receives any allegations about the behaviour of a colleague must always raise this with their line manager or the Human Resources team as quickly as possible.
7. Anyone working for QAA is expected to follow and cooperate fully with a provider's policies and procedures around safeguarding.

### **What does this mean for QAA staff?**

QAA staff and those working within review teams do not need to become experts in trauma or abuse. Statutory services are responsible for making decisions about whether harm to a child or an adult at risk has reached a threshold that is "significant".

Not all concerns will reach this level. You may observe / hear something that concerns you about a child or adult's wellbeing, or that might become a more significant risk if something isn't done to address it. In this instance, the most appropriate response is to report in accordance with a provider's policies so that a designated individual is able to provide guidance or support or information to the child or adult about how to keep themselves safe.

However, doing nothing or not acting is not acceptable. If you remain concerned after following the steps above you should contact QAA's DSL for advice. If you are affected by safeguarding issues during the course of your work you can talk to QAA's Mental Health first aiders or make use of the Employee Advice Line.

Any breaches of this policy by employees may be subject to QAA's Disciplinary Procedure. Policy breaches by QAA reviewers, assessors, visitors or consultants may result in contract termination.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed June 2027

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