



Penrith and Eden Refugee Network

PERN Safeguarding Statement

October 2025 (review date October 2026)

For full policy and procedure on Child Safeguarding, please refer to the PERN Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy.

For full policy and procedure on Adult Safeguarding, please refer to the PERN Adult Safeguarding and Protection Policy.

Who for? Everyone involved in PERN.

Purpose

To set out PERN's approach to safeguarding children and adults, welfare, modern slavery and anti-radicalisation.

To set out how to raise, report and follow-up concerns.

At PERN we

- Treat everyone with dignity and respect at all times,
- Uphold the rights of people to live a life free from abuse, exploitation, neglect and radicalisation,
- Do not tolerate bullying, racism, inappropriate, suggestive or threatening behaviour or language,
- Have an open and transparent culture where people can raise concerns and challenge inappropriate attitudes, actions and behaviours,
- Create an environment where people feel safe,
- Report and follow-up concerns,
- Raise awareness, learn and talk about sensitive and difficult issues,
- Do not trivialise concerns raised,
- Encourage and empower people to make their own decisions,
- Give the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.

PERN recognises the specific vulnerabilities that are particular to asylum seekers and refugees. These include vulnerabilities due to limited understanding of written or spoken English, insecurity of present and future legal rights to remain in the UK, isolation from family and friends, and trauma.

Our commitments extend to recognising and reporting harm that occurs anywhere, including within our activities, within other organised community activities, in the community or in a person's own home.

Child Safeguarding and Protection

We are committed to safeguarding from harm and abuse all children who come into contact with PERN and promoting their welfare. Any PERN activity where children or young people under 18 are without their parent or carer requires the prior written authorisation of the Director of PERN or a Trustee to ensure suitable plans and safeguards are in place.

Adult Safeguarding and Protection

PERN seeks to promote the welfare of everyone and whilst refugees and asylum seekers may have many vulnerabilities this does not in itself make them 'vulnerable adults' in the statutory and legal definition. An adult is defined as 'vulnerable' on the basis of their care and support needs and if they are unable to take action to protect themselves.

Section 1 - Child and Adult Safeguarding

Abuse takes many forms and is often hidden, but the following are examples of types of abuse:

1. Physical abuse including:

Assault, slapping, pushing, restraint inappropriate physical sanction

2. Domestic violence including:

Psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse, 'honour'-based violence

3. Sexual abuse including:

Rape, indecent exposure, sexual harassment, grooming, inappropriate looking or touching, sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subjection to pornography or witnessing sexual acts, sexual assault

4. Psychological abuse including:

Emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, humiliation, controlling, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, cyber bullying, isolation, unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks

5. Financial or material abuse including:

Theft, fraud, internet scamming, coercion in relation to financial affairs.

6. Neglect and acts of omission including:

Ignoring medical, emotional, or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care, and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition, and heating, inadequate supervision of children

7. Online abuse and cyberbullying

Any type of abuse, bullying, grooming, sexual exploitation that happens through the web, social media, online games and mobile phones.

If someone talks to you about abuse they are experiencing you should

- Allow them to speak without interruption and accept what they say.
- Be understanding and reassuring – do not give your opinion.
- Ask them how they would like PERN to respond.
- Tell them what you will do next.
- Make a written note of what you have been told/observed.
- Never promise to keep a secret. Explain that PERN has responsibilities for their safety. Let them know that there are others who can help them and that they are not alone.

Reporting

If disclosures of abuse or neglect are made to you or you observe matters of concern with regard to safeguarding adults or children, please speak to your activity leader who will refer the matter to the Director of PERN for appropriate follow-up. Disclosures are taken seriously but remain allegations. There is a form for reporting incidents of any concern available in the Volunteer Area of the PERN website, or by request from hello@pern.org.uk.

The Director of PERN is responsible for ensuring that safeguarding matters are followed-up according to PERN policy and procedure with regard to safeguarding adults and safeguarding children. If your concern relates to the Director of PERN or a Trustee please report the matter directly to the Designated Safeguarding lead named in this policy.

Signs of Abuse and Neglect

These are many and varied and may be hidden. Trust your instinct and use common sense. If you feel uncomfortable about something or worried about someone then talk to someone you trust and raise the matter with your activity leader.

Who can be an abusers?

Anyone can perpetrate abuse or neglect and it is often someone the victim knows, often in a position of power or trust. It should never be assumed that a person is not able to abuse or neglect someone else.

Handling Allegations of Abuse

Where a PERN member, participant, freelancer, volunteer or trustee is a victim of abuse or has allegations of abuse made against them they will be offered a mentor to support them as the allegations are investigated and followed up.

Community Safeguarding and exclusion and inclusion of people in PERN

PERN may exclude people who breach the standards set out in this policy from participation in PERN activities.

Where there are, or are suspected to be, formal or informal allegations or convictions relating to safeguarding against a PERN member or participant or someone in the community, they should be reported to the Director of PERN. The Director of PERN or their nominee will risk assess the matter and take actions in order to protect the individual, PERN participants and the community as appropriate.

Where there are safeguarding concerns about someone who wishes to participate in PERN activity the Director of PERN or their nominated person, will meet with that person (who will be invited to bring a friend with them to the meeting) and agree a written plan of what PERN activities, on-line and face to face, they may be involved with and how. This plan will be shared with relevant activity leaders and relevant participants.

Photography and Videos

PERN will request consent when taking photos and videos to be shared on PERN website, social media, newspapers and reports. Parents/carers will be asked to give consent for their children.

Further Advice

Childline 0800 1111 <https://childline.org.uk/get-support>

National Society of Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) <https://nspcc.org.uk>
You can remain anonymous and report a concern here.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0808 2000 247
– www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/

National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline – 0800 999 5428

Section 2 - Anti Radicalisation and Extremism

Spotting signs of radicalisation

Everyone is different and it is not possible to use a check-list to tell if a person is being radicalised. The following might be signs

- Accessing extremist content online.
- Justifying the use of violence to solve societal issues.
- Dressing or using symbols associated with extremist or terrorist organisations.

Extremism

Extremism is the vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. Extremism becomes terrorism when there is a belief in using violence to further the cause.

Reporting

If you know the person concerned well, try talking to them about what you've noticed if you feel comfortable doing so. Be aware this conversation may not be welcome and the person may become angry or defensive. If your concerns persist, please raise them with your activity leader who will notify the Director of PERN.

The Director of PERN or their nominated person will ask for further information about the concerns and make a decision which could be: that there are no grounds for further action, to monitor the situation, to seek further guidance from experts, or to contact Prevent and refer the matter. Prevent is a national programme that aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

PERN does not have a statutory duty to refer (unless the concern is about a child under 18 in which case the PERN Child Safeguarding procedure should be followed) but the earlier that advice is sought, the sooner it may be possible to stop someone becoming a danger to themselves or others.

If there is immediate danger dial 999.

Further Advice and Follow-up

You can report suspicious activity to the police on 0800 789 321.

ACT (Action Counters Terrorism) Early Support Line 0800 0113764 www.actearly.uk

Section 3 - Modern Slavery

What is it?

Modern slavery takes many forms and is almost always motivated by profit. It includes sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, domestic servitude and exploitation into criminal activity such as county lines drug support and cannabis cultivation. It also encompasses 'trafficking', the arrangement of someone's travel with a view to their exploitation.

Spotting Signs of Modern Slavery

You may be a victim or may be in contact with a victim of modern slavery without realising it. The following signs should trigger further inquiries and support.

- Being unkempt, uneasy or malnourished.
- Not being sure of their address.
- Not having a debit or credit card or access to money.
- Untreated injuries.
- Someone else speaking for them.
- Being picked up and dropped off in unusual ways.

If you feel you are a victim of modern slavery talk to someone trusted about what is happening to you. If you encounter someone who is a potential victim encourage them to talk about it and take actions to protect themselves.

Reporting

Anyone who has concerns about, encounters or is a potential victim of modern slavery should raise this with their activity leader who will notify the Director of PERN.

The Director of PERN, or nominated person, will seek advice and if appropriate refer the matter to a First Responder who is trained to identify victims of modern slavery. First Responders are trained to gather more information from the victim and explain what happens next. The case may be passed to the police as the person may be a victim of crime. The victim has no obligation to cooperate with the police.

The usual First Responders for PERN are the Salvation Army via their national 24/7 helpline 08000 80803733. The Police and Migrant Help are also First Responders.

Anyone can report modern slavery to the modern slavery confidential helpline 0800 0121 700 or online at [https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/report, which is](https://www.modernslaveryhelpline.org/report,whichis) run by the UK charity Unseen.

Support for victims of modern slavery is co-ordinated through the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) which is the process set up by the UK Government to identify and support victims of trafficking and modern slavery in the UK. Only designated First Responders can make such referrals.

When there is immediate danger to the victim, inform the police by calling 999. If a suspected victim is under 18, the PERN Child Safeguarding procedure should be followed (see Appendix 1 available from hello@pern.org.uk).

Asylum Seekers and Modern Slavery

Many asylum seekers arrive in the UK with the assistance of people smugglers. If an asylum seeker paid a people smuggler and is now free from their control this is not matter for the NRM. However, if a person is still under the control of another once in the UK, or was a victim of modern slavery prior to arriving in the UK and their money and actions are still under such control, they are potential victims of modern slavery and should contact a First Responder.

Further Information on Modern Slavery

www.unseenuk.org

www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms/guidance-on-the-national-referral-mechanism-for-potential-adult-victims-of-modern-slavery-england-and-wales

Designated Safeguarding Lead for adults and children

Trustee Ali Ross ali@parhelia.org.uk 07769 554715

Deputy Safeguarding Lead for adults and children

Director Sarah Wilson sarahw@pern.org.uk 07950 106559

They will oversee the implementation of policy and practice for safeguarding adults and children.

Policy Accepted: November 2023

Change to 'Community Safeguarding and exclusion and inclusion': January 2024

Review and Minor Amendments: October 2025

Review Date: 1 year from policy date