

Safeguarding Policy

Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSL): Leanne Guillen, Managing Partner, leanne@taramediation.co.uk

1. Purpose and scope

TARA Mediation (the "Practice") is committed to providing a safe, impartial, and confidential mediation process. We recognise that all adults have the right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. This policy outlines our responsibility to safeguard vulnerable adults, children, and participants from harm during the mediation process, regardless of whether the dispute is civil, commercial or workplace.

This policy applies to all Mediators, staff, contractors, and volunteers working for the Practice.

2. Definition of a "Vulnerable Person"

A vulnerable adult is anyone aged 18 or over who has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting those needs) or is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and, as a result of these needs, is unable to protect themselves against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

Note: This may apply to elderly clients, persons with mental health conditions, those under severe coercion, or other individuals.

3. Screening and assessment

Mediators will carry out screening for safety and suitability at the outset of the mediation process and on an ongoing basis:

- **Initial assessment:** Mediators will assess whether a party has the capacity to participate fully and whether they are acting voluntarily or under duress
- **Venue safety:** Mediators will ensure physical venues are safe, and where necessary, arrange separate waiting rooms or staggered arrival/departure times
- **Virtual mediation:** If conducting online mediation, the mediator will confirm the participant is alone and not being coached or coerced by someone off camera

4. Confidentiality vs. safeguarding

While Mediation is confidential, this is not absolute. The obligation to disclose information to relevant authorities overrides confidentiality if there is a serious risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult.

Participants will be informed in the Agreement to Mediate that the Mediator will disclose information if they believe:

- A child is at risk of significant harm
- A vulnerable adult is at risk of harm or abuse
- A serious crime has been or is about to be committed

5. Procedure for raising concerns

If a mediator suspects a vulnerable person is at risk:

- **Immediate action:** If there is an immediate threat to life, contact the police (999)
- **Report to DSL:** The mediator must immediately report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)
- **Documentation:** The mediator will document the concern in writing, noting dates, times, and specific details of disclosures
- **Referral:** The DSL will determine if a referral to local Social Services or Adult Safeguarding Team is required
- **Suspension:** The mediation case will be suspended until the safeguarding concern is addressed

6. Mediator safety

Mediators have the right to suspend or terminate a session if they feel threatened, physically or psychologically, by a participant, or if they feel their ability to remain impartial is compromised by a party's behaviour.

7. Training and recruitment

- All mediators will receive training on identifying signs of abuse and coercion
- The Practice will comply with safe recruitment practices, including conducting Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for staff where necessary

Policy date: 6 April 2026

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