

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS, OWN YOUR LIFE



Rights exist to protect and guide people. When we know how and when to use them, we gain the clarity to make decisions with confidence and the strength to act when it matters.

Knowing our rights can change our lives. It gives us the tools to make decisions that define our future.

SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE PEOPLE ACT 2006

What You Need to Know and How It Can Help You

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OVERVIEW

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 is a UK law focused on **preventing unsuitable people from working with children and adults in roles where harm could happen**. It sits behind the safeguarding “gatekeeping” system many services rely on: **regulated activity definitions, DBS checks, and barring decisions**.

At its centre is a simple principle: **people who are barred must not work in regulated activity**, and organisations have responsibilities to check and act when concerns arise.

The Act exists to reduce the risk of:

- **Abuse, exploitation, neglect, and harmful conduct**
- **People moving role-to-role without safeguarding information following them**
- **Unsafe recruitment into roles involving close contact, care, supervision, or trust**

It does that through:

- **Barred lists** (children’s and adults’)
- A legal framework for **regulated activity** (the types of work that require safeguarding checks)
- **Referral duties** to the DBS when someone is removed from a regulated activity because of safeguarding concerns

GUIDANCE FOR FAMILIES AND PEOPLE RECEIVING SUPPORT

1. What does “regulated activity” mean in everyday life

“Regulated activity” is work that involves **close contact, care, or responsibility** for children or adults who may be at higher risk - for example, personal care, healthcare, supervision, or certain types of support roles. The legal meaning is set out in Schedule 4.

In practice, this often covers roles like:

- Care staff providing personal care/support
 - Health staff delivering clinical care
 - Staff supervising or teaching children
- Roles managing or supervising people doing those activities

2. DBS checks and barred lists

The DBS supports safeguarding by:

- Keeping **children's and adults' barred lists**
- Making barring decisions based on referrals and information

If someone is **barred**, they must not engage in any regulated activity.

3. What can be expected from organisations

Where a role is a regulated activity, families can reasonably expect that organisations:

- **Do the correct level of DBS checking** before someone starts
- Have a process for **responding to safeguarding concerns**
- Take action when risk is identified (including removing someone from regulated activity where needed)

4. What to do if something feels unsafe

If behaviour, boundaries, or care practice feels unsafe:

- Raise concerns through the organisation's safeguarding route (manager / safeguarding lead)
- If there is an immediate risk, contact emergency services
- Where appropriate, a concern can trigger an internal investigation and, if thresholds are met, a DBS referral (explained below)

This is how knowing our rights can change lives.

When families and young people understand what support they're entitled to, they can make informed choices, access the right services, and create new possibilities for their future. One inspiring example is Eliot, who had been institutionalised for four and a half years (4.5), going through a really hard time. However, with person-centred and proactive support, Eliot began to live the life he has always wanted, finding joy and purpose in his favourite activities, in his own home.

MORE



OBLIGATIONS AND DUTIES FOR COMMISSIONERS, PUBLIC BODIES AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

1. Regulated activity providers: duty to refer (DBS)

If an organisation is a **regulated activity provider**, and it removes someone from regulated activity (or a person leaves during an investigation) because they harmed someone or posed a risk, **there is a legal duty to refer relevant information to DBS.**

This matters for commissioning because it prevents “quiet exits” where risk doesn’t follow the worker to the next setting.

2. Information-sharing responsibilities

DBS can request more information during decision-making, and there are legal routes requiring certain bodies to provide it when asked (including provisions linked to local authorities).

3. Commissioning expectations in plain terms

Commissioning and oversight should ensure:

- Providers only place staff in regulated roles with **appropriate checks and safer recruitment**
- Contracts and QA processes look for:
 - **Clear safeguarding governance**
 - **Staff supervision and escalation routes**
 - **Referral practice (not only “internal handling”)**
- Workforce supply routes (agencies/placement arrangements) are safe and understand referral responsibilities

4. Accountability and governance

This Act supports a system where safeguarding risk is:

- **Identified**
- **Acted on**
- **Recorded and shared appropriately**
- **Prevented from repeating elsewhere via barring/referrals**



HOW PEOPLE AND FAMILIES CAN TAKE PART AND BENEFIT FROM THE ACT

- **Know what “regulated activity” means:** it explains why some roles require higher DBS checks.
- **Ask what safeguarding checks are in place** for staff supporting children/adults in close-contact roles.
- **Expect concerns to be taken seriously:** when risk is identified, organisations have responsibilities that go beyond “moving someone away quietly”.
- **Understand that DBS referrals exist to protect others, too,** to prevent repeat harm across services.

Original Source:

**The information in this summary is based on the legislation published at:
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Full text available at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/47/contents>