

Safeguarding Policy

General Policy Statement

Quest Training is committed to ensuring the rights of the young person and the rights of adults, while also seeking to protect both groups in their association and work, with each other. In promoting the development of our apprentices/learners, we have a responsibility to ensure that they have sufficient knowledge and confidence, to reject any behaviour from their peers, or from adults, which may threaten them in any way.

Quest Training fully recognises its responsibilities for the protection of all staff and apprentices/learners.

Our Policy covers the following:

- Ensuring we practice safe recruitment in checking the suitability of staff – all staff are subject to an Enhanced Disclosure Barring Service check and shortlisted candidates are subject to an online search
- Raising awareness of safeguarding issues to all apprentices/learners, employers and staff and equipping both employees and apprentices/learners with the skills needed to keep them safe including online safety.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying and reporting any cases, or suspected cases of abuse including low level concerns.
- Establishing a safe environment in which vulnerable groups can develop.

Commitment Statement

We recognise that, because of the regular contact with apprentices/learners, Quest Training staff are well placed to observe any outward signs of abuse and have regular reviews with individual apprentices/learners, which provides a platform for them to discuss any possible issues they may have.

Quest Training will therefore: -

- Establish and maintain an environment where apprentices/learners feel secure, are encouraged to talk, and are listened to.
- Ensure that all apprentices/learners know that there are designated staff, within Quest Training, to whom they can approach if they are worried.
- Include opportunities within the programme for apprentices/learners to develop the skills they need to recognise and stay safe from abuse or harm.
- Ensure that there are systems/risk assessments in place to embed safeguarding to include contracted services who visit Quest Head Office, i.e., ICT support, office maintenance companies/suppliers.

Quest Training recognises and adheres to the statutory requirements within the following important and relevant pieces of safeguarding legislation, guidance, and frameworks, ensuring these form an integral part of our decision making, these include, but are not limited to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018 updated 2023)
- Children's Act (1989, 2004)
- The Human Rights Act (1998)
- The Education Act (2002)
- Sexual Offences Act (2003)
- Female Genital Mutilation Act (2003)
- Every Child Matters (2003)
- Mental Capacity Act 2005

- Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2007 amended 2012)
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act SVGA (2006 amended 2012)
- Children and Young Persons Act (2008)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Disclosure and Barring Service Code of Practice (2012)
- Protection of Freedoms Act (2012)
- The Care Act (2014)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- What to do if you are worried a child is being abused (2015)
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Prevent Duty 2015
- Children and Social Work Act (2017)
- Mental health and behaviour in schools (DfE, 2018)
- Information sharing advice for practitioners (2018)
- UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS, 2020)
- Education and Training (Welfare of Children) Act (2021)
- Domestic Abuse Act (2021)
- Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022
- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards
- Health and Care Act 2022
- Online Safety Act (2023)

To support our commitment to the safeguarding and well-being of all our apprentices/learners, and regarding the above legislation, we will:

- Ensure we have a designated senior person for safeguarding and ensure that every member of staff knows the name of the designated senior person, their role and responsibility for safeguarding.
- Ensure that all staff and apprentices/learners are aware of our Designated Persons for Safeguarding.
- Ensure that all staff are aware, and understand their responsibilities, in relation to Safeguarding and in being alert to the signs and indicators of abuse and for referring any concerns directly to the Designated Person for Safeguarding.
- Ensure that effective Safeguarding procedures are developed, implemented, and monitored to ensure their effectiveness. These procedures are based on the 5R's approach of Recognition, Response, Record, Report, and Refer. Also, the 6 principles of Safeguarding, which include empowerment, prevention, protection, proportionality, partnership, and accountability.
- Ensure that Quest Training develop links with relevant external agencies, local safeguarding boards and co-operates with any requirements relating to safeguarding referral matters.
- Keep written records of any concerns about apprentices/learners, even where there is no need to refer the matter immediately. These concerns will be kept confidential, in the appropriate file, by the Designated Person.
- Ensure that all Governors and staff are trained in Safeguarding and continue to update their CPD in this area and attend regular relevant training and development sessions/formal courses, and qualifications, as identified and implemented by Quest's Safeguarding Lead.
- Ensure that all staff are provided with guidance regarding the management of safeguarding children, young apprentices/learners, vulnerable learners, vulnerable adults, and those with a disability who may be at risk.
- Ensure Quest Training's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures are accessible on-line for adults/young people/children and staff, via our website.

Quest Training recognises its responsibility regarding the safeguarding of young and vulnerable apprentices/learners from abuse and from inappropriate and inadequate care and is committed to responding in all cases where there is concern.

Due to the nature of our work, Quest Training may be in the frontline of work with some children, young apprentices/learners, vulnerable learners, vulnerable adults, and those with a disability who might be at the risk of exploitation. This may mean that we are the first to know that a child, young or vulnerable learner, or adult, is being abused, or that we are concerned about a person's well-being. Everyone has an equal responsibility to ensure that the individual needs and welfare of the person are put first and to safeguard any person with whom we may come into contact.

This responsibility not only rests with the Governance, Directors, Managers and Designated Person for Safeguarding, but also with every individual member of staff employed within our organisation whilst at work, at an employer's premises or place of work.

We will ensure that our Safeguarding Policy and Procedures are reviewed at least annually to ensure that they are still relevant and effective.

Understanding Safeguarding

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the protection of children and adults at risk from abuse and neglect, promoting health and development, ensuring safety and care, and ensuring optimum life chances.

The Care Act 2014 sets responsibility for adult safeguarding in primary legislation, endorsing the principle of wellbeing, placing safeguarding adult's duties on a statutory basis. The Statutory Guidance to the Care Act 2014 supports the Act, and Section 14 clearly states that safeguarding is defined 'as protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect'.

In England, safeguarding practice refers to children, including unborn babies and young people up to the age of 18 years, who live in the UK or who are temporarily resident here. The fact that a child has become sixteen years of age, does not change their status, or their entitlement to services, or their protection under the Children Act 1989, 2004 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 provides an extended period of support for care leavers, up to the age of 25, via personal advisor support.

Safeguarding is a proactive process of protecting and ensuring the safety and well-being of young and vulnerable apprentices/learners. Safeguarding may involve instances in which a young, or vulnerable apprentice/learner is suffering, or likely to suffer, from harm. Safeguarding involves adopting safer recruitment practices to assist in identifying persons who are unsuitable to work with young, or vulnerable apprentices/learners.

What are the benefits of effective Safeguarding?

- When apprentices/learners feel safe and secure they can concentrate on learning.
- Apprentices/learners can rely on those people in positions of trust.
- Staff are protected from malicious and misplaced allegations.
- Staff are clear about individual responsibilities, roles, and boundaries.
- Apprentices/learners are appropriately protected, and all issues are dealt with effectively.

Safer Recruitment

Interview process

Quest Training Ltd will take all possible steps to prevent unsuitable persons working with young, or vulnerable apprentices/learners, and in doing so will follow the good practice contained within the legislative document, Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2007) and the Safer Practice, Safer

Learning document, produced by NIACE and all updated versions of Government legislation related to Safer Recruitment practices.

When interviewing potential staff, we will ensure that:

- There is an open recruitment process.
- There is a rigorous interview with specific questions relating to Safeguarding.
- Applicant's identity and claims to academic, or vocational qualifications will be verified.
- References will be taken up by direct contact with referees.
- Evidence of the date of birth and address of the applicant will be obtained.
- Where appropriate, an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Check will be conducted.
- Interview staff/HR have the required training and CPD to carry out safer recruitment interviews and induction processes.

Where a position requires an Enhanced DBS check, this will be made clear on the job advert and application form and a statement explaining Quest Training's commitment to safeguarding will be documented. All applicants will complete an application form, enabling each of them to have the same opportunity to provide information about themselves and assist in identifying any gaps in their employment history.

During interviews, the interviewer(s) will explore:

- The applicant's attitude and demeanour towards young, or vulnerable, apprentices/learners.
- The applicant's ability to support our commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young, or vulnerable, apprentices/learners.
- Any gaps in the applicant's employment history.
- Any concerns, or discrepancies, arising from the information obtained.
- As part of the shortlisting process Quest Training will carry out an online search as part of our due diligence on the shortlisted candidates. This may help identify any incidents or issues that have happened, and are publicly available online, which we might want to explore with the applicant at interview. Shortlisted candidates will be informed that online searches will be done as part of due diligence checks.

A Single DBS Central Record will be held for all staff employed by Quest Training, and this will be updated on an ongoing basis. If required a section 128 check to be carried out using the Teaching Regulation Agency's (TRA) employer access service.

Post appointment

All staff will take part in an induction programme, which will vary dependent on the nature of the role. The purpose of this will be to:

- Provide awareness and explanations of relevant policies and procedures.
- Provide support for the role in which they have been engaged.
- Provide opportunities for a new member of staff to ask questions, or discuss concerns, relating to their role or responsibilities.
- Enable individual line managers and colleagues to recognise any concerns about the person's ability, or suitability, from the outset and address them if deemed appropriate.
- Ensure that individuals are aware of reporting concerns and who the Designated Persons for Safeguarding are.
- Ensure that individuals are aware of other relevant policies and procedures, i.e. Disciplinary Procedure, EDI Policy.

Reporting Apprentice/Learner Abuse and Neglect/Child on Child Abuse

Procedure to undertake following a young or vulnerable apprentice/learner confiding about, or suspecting, a case of abuse or neglect/Child on Child abuse:

Where a young or vulnerable apprentice/learner seeks out a member of staff to confide in and share information about abuse, or neglect, or talks spontaneously individually, or in groups, our staff will:

- Listen carefully to the apprentice/learner, and not directly question him/her.
- Give the apprentice/learner time and attention.
- Allow the apprentice/learner to give a spontaneous account; and not stop the apprentice/learner freely recalling significant events.
- Make an accurate record of the information given, taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the apprentice/learner's presentation, as well as what was said. Quest staff will not discard this as it may be needed later as evidence.
- Use the apprentice/learner's own words where possible.
- Explain that they cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.

Reassure the apprentice/learner that:

- You are glad that he/she has spoken to you.
- The information will be taken seriously and they will be supported throughout
- That he/she has not done anything wrong.
- What you are going to do next.
- Explain that help will need to be sought to keep them safe.

The apprentice/learner should be asked NOT to repeat his / her accounts to anyone. **The Designated Person for Safeguarding must be informed immediately**, who will investigate the concern and take appropriate action. All records of the investigation will be kept strictly confidential and stored in a secure place. Outside agencies and Resources on Child Protection can, and will, be used to assist the company.

Who to contact:

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Michala Loe
Email: safeguarding@questfortraining.com
Tel: 01474 704441
Mobile: 07873359852 (24hours)

Staff to contact DSL on the details above to discuss procedure to deal with identified concern. Unless the apprentice/learner is in immediate significant harm then please call 999 and then contact DSL.

Child-on-child abuse

Staff should also recognise that certain behaviours as "just banter" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment for children and young people and a culture that normalises abuse.

Staff should understand that even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in apprentice/learner workplaces, this doesn't mean it is not happening. If staff have any concerns about child-on-child abuse, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL).

Mental health support

Quest Training will refer any apprentice/learner who requires mental health support. Prior to reporting, please refer to DSL or Health and Well-being for information and guidance.

Young people missing from education and training

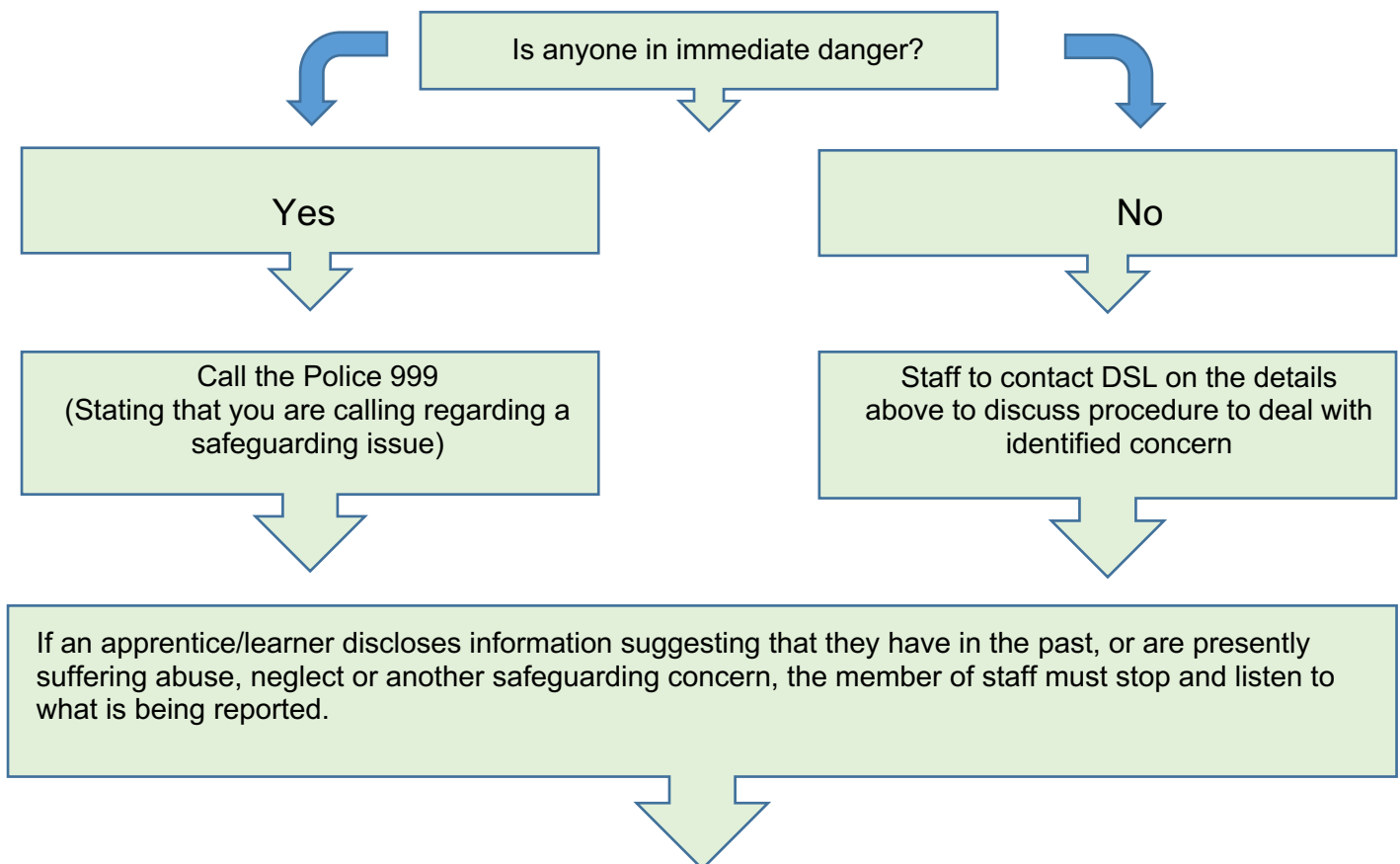
As a training provider we have a duty of care to be aware if an apprentice/learner is missing from education/work. This is more vital for our young apprentice/learners who fall within the 16-18-year category. We monitor attendance via our milestone review process and report any concerns in relation to apprentice/learner safety.

We recognise that absence from education can be linked to safeguarding and that this may, in some cases, pose serious threat to safety. Connected safeguarding issues could include, but are not limited to:

- Poverty
- Domestic abuse
- Neglect

In any period of absence from training, it is important that we have an explanation for absence and to follow up, via our Safeguarding Procedures, if we have reason for concern.

Reporting Procedure



Explain as soon as possible (before full disclosure if possible) that you are not able to promise complete confidentiality, and that you have a duty to report this information to the designated person within Quest Training. Reassure the student that only those who need to know will be told.



Do not ask leading questions about what may have happened e.g., 'Did he/she do to you?' Just ask, 'What do you want to tell me?'



Report the concern on the safeguarding recording system and record as accurately as possible what was said or tell a designated safeguarding lead immediately. The designated safeguarding lead will take responsibility for all further actions.



DSL to liaise with other agencies / professionals as appropriate. DSL to inform Manager Director immediately of action taken.
(Learners under 18 contact appropriate Children's Services, Learners over 18 contact appropriate Adult Services)

Whistleblowing

Quest Training is committed to ensuring that any staff concerns will be taken seriously and investigated. All reports will be dealt with in confidence, with only staff who need to know, being informed. This will:

- Encourage employees to feel confident in raising concerns.
- Establish a fair and impartial investigative procedure.
- Provide avenues for employees to raise concerns and receive appropriate feedback.
- Ensure that employees receive a response to concerns and are aware of how to pursue them if they are not satisfied.
- Ensure that employees will be protected from any reprisals or victimisation.

Please refer to our full Whistleblowing Policy for further details on specific reporting processes and other information.

Professional Curiosity

Professional curiosity in the context of safeguarding typically refers to the mindset and approach that professionals, particularly those working in roles involving the welfare of vulnerable individuals, should adopt. It involves a willingness to dig deeper, ask questions, and seek additional information when there are concerns about the safety or well-being of a person under their care or supervision.

- **Questioning and Investigating:** Professionals should be willing to question and investigate situations that seem unusual or raise concerns. This may involve noticing signs or behaviours that could indicate abuse, neglect, or harm.
- **Active Listening:** Professionals should listen carefully to what individuals are saying and, equally importantly, what they might not be saying. Sometimes, people may not explicitly disclose abuse or harm, but subtle cues or changes in behavior can indicate a problem.
- **Gathering Information:** When there are suspicions or concerns, professionals should gather relevant information. This might include talking to colleagues, consulting records, or seeking input from other relevant professionals or agencies.
- **Challenging Assumptions:** Professional curiosity involves challenging assumptions and stereotypes. It means not making assumptions based on a person's background, appearance, or circumstances. Every individual should be treated as unique, and their specific needs and vulnerabilities should be considered.
- **Recording and Reporting:** If professionals find evidence or reasonable grounds for concern, they should document their observations and report them to the DSL as per Quest Training policies and legal requirements.
- **Balancing Privacy and Safety:** While being curious and proactive, professionals must also respect individuals' privacy and dignity. Safeguarding measures should be implemented in a way that minimises intrusion and respects the individual's rights.
- **Professional curiosity in safeguarding** is about staying vigilant, asking questions, and taking appropriate action when there are indications that a vulnerable person may be at risk of harm. It's a crucial element of ensuring the safety and well-being of individuals, especially in settings such as healthcare, social work, education, and child protection.

Allegations against Staff

This applies should anyone have concerns regarding inappropriate behaviour by a member of staff where they have:

- Behaved inappropriately in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed, an apprentice/learner.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, an apprentice/learner.
- Behaved towards an apprentice/learner in a way that indicates he/she is unsuitable to work with them.
- Breached Staff Code of Conduct (see in appendix)

The Designated Person for Safeguarding should be informed of the matter immediately. (Where the Designated Person nominated for safeguarding is involved in the allegation, the most senior member of staff should be informed).

An investigation will take place which:

- Will determine if the police need to be involved immediately to protect the apprentice/learner further.
- Will record all details received and secure them safely.
- Will ensure the alleged member of staff is fully conversant of the allegation, is supported where relevant and free from victimisation.
- Will determine whether suspension is appropriate whilst undertaking the investigation.

All allegations will be acted upon, however, due to the variance in the risk levels, all allegations will be treated individually, and the appropriate actions assigned on a case-by-case basis.

Concerns that do not meet the harm threshold: Quest Training has policies and processes in place to deal with low-level concerns and allegations that do not meet the harm threshold.

A low-level concern is any concern that an adult has acted in a way that:

- is inconsistent with the staff code of conduct, including inappropriate conduct outside of work
- does not meet the allegations threshold or is not considered serious enough to refer to the local authority designated officer (LADO).

To help prevent low-level concerns, staff codes of conduct, behaviour policies and safeguarding policies and procedures should be implemented effectively, and appropriate action should be taken to deal with any concern.

Sharing concerns

Low-level concerns should be reported to the DSL. If there are concerns about a DSL, these should be reported to the Managing Director.

Anonymous Allegations

Concerns raised anonymously tend to be far less effective, and depending on the level of information, the matter may not be investigated at all.

The decision taken to investigate the matter further will depend upon:

- The seriousness of the matter.
- Whether the concern is believable.
- Whether an investigation can be carried out on the information provided.

Monitoring

The Governance, Managing Director, Senior Management and Lead QAs are responsible for monitoring equality, diversity, and inclusion within their own area and for ensuring that the business is conducted in accordance with our Safeguarding Policies.

Overall responsibility for the monitoring, implementation and enforcement of our Safeguarding Policy lies with the Managing Director and Governance Committee.

Safeguarding is a fixed agenda item on the Management meeting, and all meetings' agendas.

Filtering and monitoring

Filtering and monitoring in education aims to strike a balance between providing apprentice/learners with access to valuable online resources for learning while ensuring a safe, secure, and productive online environment. These practices are typically implemented with a focus on protecting apprentice/learners, complying with legal requirements, and optimising the educational experience.

At Quest Training we will ensure that we understand that content filtering involves the use of software or hardware solutions to block or restrict access to certain websites or online content deemed inappropriate or non-educational. This will help ensure that apprentice/learners and staff are not exposed to harmful or distracting material while using our provided internet access.

Filtering and monitoring is used to enhance the security and safety of apprentice/learners and the training provider's network. It helps protect against cyber threats, malware, phishing attempts, and other online risks that could compromise data or disrupt learning.

General

This Policy should not be read in isolation, but is designed to be read in conjunction with:

- Quest Training's Business Plan,
- Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy,
- Prevent and British Values Policy,
- Health and Safety Policy,
- Whistleblowing Policy,
- E-Safety Policy,
- Complaints Policy and Procedure,
- Covid 19 Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Low Level Concerns Policy
- Lock Down Policy
- Staff Training and Development Strategy Policy and Procedure
- Digital Strategy Policy
- Modern Slavery Policy
- GDPR Policy

This Policy will be reviewed yearly, or as required, as part of Quest Training's quality assurance cycle.

I confirm that this Policy is authorised and approved by Abbie Fulks – Managing Director.

Signature:

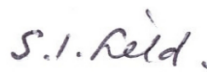


Date: 23rd September 2025

Implementation date: 30th September 2025

Review date: September 2026

Signed by Governance:



Date: 23rd September 2025 Governance review date: September 2026

Useful Information and Guidance Section - Contents

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Appendix 1 - Useful Links

Quest Padlet links

[Safeguarding](#)

[Prevent](#)

[British Values](#)

Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-safer-recruitment-in-education>

Working together to Safeguard Children

[Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK](#)

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#)

Kent Safeguarding Children Board (LCSB)

<https://www.kscmp.org.uk/guidance/worried-about-a-child>

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act

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

Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/9/contents/enacted>

Kent and Medway Safeguarding Adults Board

<https://www.kmsab.org.uk/>

Safer Practice, Safer Learning

https://repository.excellencegateway.org.uk/7aef319e-9SaferPractice_1.pdf#:~:text=Safer%20Practice%2C%20Safer%20Learning%20offers,it%20among%20staff%20and%20learners.

OFSTED – FAQs on Safeguarding

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsted-inspections-of-further-education-and-skills-providers>

Mental Capacity Act 2005 and Code of Practice 2007 (revised 2014)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-capacity-act-code-of-practice>

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dh-mental-capacity-act-2005-deprivation-of-liberty-safeguards>

Appendix 2 - Helpline Contact numbers

Care Quality Commission	03000 616161
CEOP	0808 800 5000
Ofsted	0300 123 4666
NSPCC	0808 800 5000
Police	101, or 999 in an emergency
NHS Direct	111, or 999 in an emergency
Crime Stoppers	0800 555111
Hestia's Respond to Abuse Line	02038793695

Kent County Council - During the day and in office hours

Concerned about an adult?

call 03000 41 61 61 (text relay 18001 03000 41 61 61)

email social.services@kent.gov.uk.

Concerned about a child?

Call 03000 41 11 11 (text relay 18001 03000 41 11 11)

email social.services@kent.gov.uk

Out of hours and in an emergency

If you need to contact us outside of normal office hours, for example during the night, call 03000 41 91 91.

If you think someone is in immediate danger, the best thing to do is call 999 for the emergency services.

Appendix 3 - Staff Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct will act as a guide for all actions taken by staff and anyone else working on behalf of Quest Training. If it is necessary to act contrary to it (for example visiting an apprentice/ learner in their home), staff should only do so after discussion and approval with their line manager.

The Code of Conduct states that, all Quest staff must:

- Place the safety and well-being of apprentices/learners first – before any organisational, or personal, goals and before any loyalty to colleagues and friends.
- Help and assist in developing a culture in which any member of staff can feel comfortable about pointing out, to another member of staff, that his/her behaviour is, or may have been, inappropriate.
- Be committed to actively preventing the exploitation and abuse of young or vulnerable apprentices/learners.
- Respect all individual apprentices/learners, regardless of any protected characteristic (as defined within the Equality Act 2010), ability and treat each individual apprentice/learner with respect and dignity.
- Respect each apprentice/learner's boundaries and help them to develop their own sense of rights, as well as helping them to know what they can do, if they feel there is a problem.
- Ensure adherence to Quest's E-Safety Policy
- Ensure that in the event of witnessing a safeguarding incident, under no circumstances must the member of staff transport any young person, adult or vulnerable adult in their personal vehicle. The member of staff should notify the appropriate authority and remain with the person until the official authority has arrived.

The focus of your relationship with an apprentice/learner you have met through the course of your work should always remain professional and you should always act in a professional manner. You should never develop a personal relationship, and you should avoid socialising with apprentices/learners, on occasions where it does not constitute part of your normal duties and avoid establishing relationships through the use of social media, such as Facebook, or Twitter.

- Do not take illegal drugs whilst at work, do not drink alcohol prior to, or during, contact with learners and do not smoke with, or in front of apprentices/learners.
- Do not give apprentices/learners alcohol, tobacco products, or any form of drug or medication. You should not assist apprentices/learners in anyway, in obtaining these items.
- Do not engage in, or tolerate, the bullying, or harassment of any person.
- Never engage in, or tolerate, inappropriate physical activity such as 'horse play'.
- Ensure all lone working with young or vulnerable learners is undertaken with caution and awareness in mind.

It is essential to have guidelines to follow in order to minimise the possibility for abuse, misunderstanding and misinterpretation. False and malicious allegations are rare, but general good practice will help prevent them. The following examples will help to create a positive, transparent culture and climate.

To maintain a safe and appropriate emotional and physical distance from young or vulnerable apprentices/learners, do not:

- Make sexual or discriminatory comments of any kind.
- Engage in rough or sexually provocative games.
- Make sexual comments / innuendos.
- Lend or borrow money or property.
- Have exclusive, or secretive relationships.
- Invite apprentices/learners into your home.
- Use inappropriate reading materials / internet use.
- Use unacceptable forms of restraint.

All employees should be aware of the potential for misunderstanding when touching, or coming into contact with, young or vulnerable apprentices/learners. If it is an accepted part of a course, touching should be appropriate to the situation and, if applicable, all relevant guidelines should be followed. Consoling a young or vulnerable apprentice/learner who is upset, or administering first-aid are examples of necessary and acceptable behaviour.

Employees should, however, endeavour to minimise any possible misunderstanding of their actions.

Appendix 4 - Definitions and Types of Abuse and Neglect

This section closely reflects the procedures and guidance in the Home Office document "Working Together to Safeguard Children" 2018.

'Child abuse and neglect' is a generic term encompassing all ill treatment of young and vulnerable apprentices/learners, including serious physical and sexual assaults, as well as cases where the standard of care does not adequately support the persons health, or development'.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a young or vulnerable apprentice/learner. Somebody may abuse a young or vulnerable apprentice/learner by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm.

Young or vulnerable apprentices/learners may be abused in the family, or an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. An adult or adults, or another child or children, may abuse them.

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) sets out definitions and examples of the four broad categories of abuse:

- Physical Abuse
- Emotional Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent, or carer, fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness.

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a person, such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their development. It may involve conveying to the person that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only in so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age, or developmentally inappropriate expectations, being imposed in them. These may include interactions that are beyond the person's developmental capacity, as well as over-protection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing them participating in normal social interactions. It may involve serious bullying, causing the person frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation, or corruption, of persons. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a person, though it may occur alone.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing, or enticing, a person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving them in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic material, or watching sexual activities, or encouraging sexually inappropriate behaviour. Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse and can be a one-off occurrence or might happen over time. All children and young people, including 16- and 17-year-olds, can experience child sexual exploitation.

Neglect

Neglect involves the persistent failure to meet a person's basic, or physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the person's health and development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy because of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent, or carer, failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter, including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a person from physical harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision, including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care, or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsive to, a person's basic emotional needs.

Additional types of abuse and unsafe activities, which we recognise, and which have become more prevalent in recent times, are:

- Bullying and Harassment
- Discriminatory Abuse
- Financial Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Alcohol and Drugs
- Hate Crime
- Cyber-bullying
- Modern slavery
- Child Trafficking
- FGM
- Faith/Belief-based harm including witchcraft.
- Forced Marriage
- Psychological/emotional
- Organisational
- Radicalisation, including County Lines
- Breast Ironing
- Young people missing from care, including residential and fostering care and missing adults.

For further information please refer to Appendix 1

Signs and indicators of possible abuse

When considering whether there is enough information and evidence to suggest a young or vulnerable apprentice/learner has been abused, there are several possible indicators. However, there may also be a perfectly reasonable explanation, so it is important to remain vigilant, but not be overzealous, nor jump to conclusions. There may also be no signs or indicators of abuse, however this does not necessarily mean that a report of abuse is false.

Signs suggesting physical abuse.

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them.
- Injuries that have occurred on parts of the body which are unusual and not indicative of a fall, or because of playing a contact / rough sport etc.
- Injuries that have not received medical attention.
- Neglect – under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food.
- Untreated illnesses, unkempt appearance, dirty clothes etc.
- Changes in routine.

Signs suggesting emotional abuse.

- Changes or regressions in mood or behaviour
- Nervousness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement, or lack of concentration
- Attention seeking behaviour.
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away

Signs suggesting sexual abuse.

- Any allegation made by an individual
- Individuals with an excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour

- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing.
- Individuals who are sexually provocative, or seductive
- Severe sleeping disorders
- Eating disorders

Signs suggesting neglect.

- Poor appearance and hygiene, being smelly or dirty, being hungry or not given money for food
- Health and development problems, anaemia
- Housing and family issues, living in an unsuitable home environment, such as having no heating
- Change in behaviour, becoming clingy

Child sexual violence and harassment

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex from primary through to secondary stage and into colleges. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

As set out in Part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), all staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.

KCSIE provides links to support and advice that can be offered:

Lucy to Faithful Foundation's "Shore Space," a confidential online chat for young people with concerns about sexual thoughts or behaviours.

CSA Centre's educational resources. The Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse now features a dedicated landing page specifically for education professionals.

The Children's Society's CSE prevention page. The Children's Society provides a comprehensive range of resources to support in preventing and responding to child exploitation.

These are all on our PADLET page.

Online Safety

Online safety refers to the act of staying safe online. It is also commonly known as internet safety, e-safety, and cyber safety. It encompasses all technological devices which have access to the internet from PCs and laptops to smartphones, smart watches and tablets. Being safe online means individuals are protecting themselves and others from online harms and risks which may jeopardise their personal information, lead to unsafe communications or even affect their mental health and wellbeing.

The internet and social media have made information more accessible, but they've also amplified the spread of fake news - both misinformation (unintentionally false) and disinformation (intentionally deceptive). These forms of false content pose significant risks, particularly to children and vulnerable individuals, who may lack the skills to evaluate credibility. The impact includes emotional distress, confusion, and increased susceptibility to harm from misleading online content.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable and ever evolving, but can be categorised into four areas of risk:

Content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate, or harmful content, for example: pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, antisemitism, radicalisation, and extremism.

Contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users; for example: peer to peer pressure, commercial advertising and adults posing as children or young adults with the intention to groom or exploit them for sexual, criminal, financial or other purposes.

Conduct: online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm; for example, making, sending, and receiving explicit images (e.g., consensual, and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nudes and/or pornography, sharing other explicit images and online bullying,

Commerce: risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

Criminal exploitation is child abuse where children and young people are manipulated and coerced into committing crimes.

Some specific forms of CCE can include children being forced or manipulated into transporting drugs or money through county lines, working in cannabis factories, shoplifting, or pickpocketing. They can also be forced or manipulated into committing vehicle crime or threatening/committing serious violence to others.

Children can become trapped by this type of exploitation, as perpetrators can threaten victims (and their families) with violence or entrap and coerce them into debt. They may be coerced into carrying weapons such as knives or begin to carry a knife for a sense of protection from harm from others. As children involved in criminal exploitation often commit crimes themselves, their vulnerability as victims is not always recognised by adults and professionals, (particularly older children), and they are not treated as victims despite the harm they have experienced. They may still have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears to be something they have agreed or consented to

It is important to note that the experience of girls who are criminally exploited can be very different to that of boys. The indicators may not be the same, however professionals should be aware that girls are at risk of criminal exploitation too. It is also important to note that both boys and girls being criminally exploited may be at higher risk of sexual exploitation.

The word 'gang' means different things in different contexts, the government in their paper 'Safeguarding children and young people who may be affected by gang activity' distinguishes between peer groups, street gangs and organised criminal gangs.

Peer group

A relatively small and transient social grouping which may or may not describe themselves as a gang depending on the context.

Street gang

"Groups of young people who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity."

Organised criminal gangs.

"A group of individuals for whom involvement in crime is for personal gain (financial or otherwise). For most crime is their 'occupation'."

It's not illegal for a young person to be in a gang – there are different types of 'gang' and not every 'gang' is criminal or dangerous. However, gang membership can be linked to illegal activity, particularly organised criminal gangs involved in trafficking, drug dealing and violent crime.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or nonpenetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing, and touching outside clothing. It may include noncontact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse including via the internet.

CSE can occur over time or be a one-off occurrence and may happen without the child's immediate knowledge for example through others sharing videos or images of them on social media. With the introduction of Artificial Intelligence there have been accounts of fake images be shared online of individuals to attempt to exploit or intimidate them via blackmail.

CSE can affect any child who has been coerced into engaging in sexual activities. This includes 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex. Some children may not realise they are being exploited for example they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

Children and young people can be trafficked into or within the UK to be sexually exploited. They are moved around the country and abused by being forced to take part in sexual activities, often with more than one person. Young people in gangs can also be sexually exploited.

Sometimes abusers use violence and intimidation to frighten or force a child or young person, making them feel as if they've no choice. They may lend them large sums of money they know can't be repaid or use financial abuse to control them.

Anybody can be a perpetrator of CSE, no matter their age, gender, or race. The relationship could be framed as friendship, someone to look up to or romantic. Children and young people who are exploited may also be used to 'find' or coerce others to join groups.

Serious Violence

In the 2018 Serious Violence Strategy, the government defines serious violence as "specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, and gun crime and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in gangs and county lines drug dealing.

Contextual Safeguarding

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse.

Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse beyond their front doors.

Bullying and Harassment

'Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'.

Under the Children Act 1989, a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'.

The four key characteristics of bullying are that it is:

- Repetitive and persistent
- Intentionally harmful
- Involving an imbalance of power
- Causing feelings of distress, fear, loneliness, or lack of confidence

Discriminatory Abuse

- Unequal treatment based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation (known as 'protected characteristics' under the Equality Act 2010 and the Worker Protection Act 2023)
- Verbal abuse, derogatory remarks, or inappropriate use of language, related to a protected characteristic
- Denying access to communication aids, not allowing access to an interpreter, signer or lip-reader
- Harassment, or deliberate exclusion, on the grounds of a protected characteristic
- Denying basic rights to healthcare, education, employment, and criminal justice, relating to a protected characteristic
- Substandard service provision relating to a protected characteristic

Financial Abuse

- Theft of money or possessions
- Fraud, scamming
- Preventing a person from accessing their own money, benefits, or assets
- Employees taking a loan from a person using the service
- Undue pressure, duress, threat, or undue influence, put on the person in connection with loans, wills, property, inheritance, or financial transactions
- Arranging less care than is needed to save money to maximise inheritance
- Denying assistance to manage/monitor financial affairs
- Denying assistance to access benefits
- Misuse of personal allowance in a care home
- Misuse of benefits or direct payments in a family home
- Someone moving into a person's home and living rent free without agreement, or under duress
- False representation, using another person's bank account, cards, or documents
- Exploitation of a person's money or assets, e.g., unauthorised use of a car
- Misuse of a power of attorney, deputy, appointee ship or other legal authority
- Rogue trading – e.g., unnecessary, or overpriced property repairs and failure to carry out agreed repairs, or poor workmanship

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence, or abuse, can be characterised by any of the indicators of abuse outlined in this document, relating to:

- psychological
- physical
- sexual
- financial
- emotional

Alcohol and Drugs

- Use and abuse of drugs and alcohol by teens is very common and can have serious consequences. In the 15–24-year age range, 50% of deaths (from accidents, homicides, suicides) involve alcohol or drug abuse

- Drugs and alcohol also contribute to physical and sexual aggression, such as assault, or rape. Possible stages of teenage experience with alcohol and drugs include abstinence (non-use), experimentation, regular use (both recreational and compensatory for other problems), abuse, and dependency
- Repeated and regular recreational use can lead to other problems like anxiety and depression. Some teenagers regularly use drugs, or alcohol, to compensate for anxiety, depression, or a lack of positive social skills
- Teen use of tobacco and alcohol should not be minimized because they can be "gateway drugs" for other drugs (marijuana, cocaine, hallucinogens, inhalants, and heroin). The combination of teenagers' curiosity, risk taking behaviour, and social pressure make it very difficult to say no

Hate Crime

- In most crimes it is something the victim has in their possession, or control, that motivates the offender to commit the crime. With hate crime it is 'who' the victim is, or 'what' the victim appears to be, that motivates the offender to commit the crime
- A hate crime is defined as 'Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim, or any other person, to be motivated by hostility, or prejudice, based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility, or prejudice, against a person who is transgender, or perceived to be transgender'
- A hate incident is any incident which the victim, or anyone else, thinks is based on someone's prejudice towards them because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or because they are transgender

Cyber-bullying

- Cyberbullying, or cyber-harassment, is a form of bullying or harassment using electronic means. Cyberbullying and cyber-harassment are also known as online bullying. It has become increasingly common, especially among teenagers, as the digital sphere has expanded, and technology has advanced

Modern slavery/human child trafficking

- Human trafficking
- Forced labour
- Domestic servitude
- Sexual exploitation, such as escort work, prostitution, and pornography
- Debt bondage – being forced to work to pay off debts that realistically they never will be able to
- Trafficking is where children and young people tricked, forced, or persuaded to leave their homes and are moved, or transported and then exploited, forced to work, or sold.

Children are trafficked for:

- sexual exploitation
- benefit fraud
- forced marriage.
- domestic slavery like cleaning, cooking, and childcare
- forced labour in factories or agriculture.
- committing crimes, like begging, theft, working on cannabis farms, or moving drugs

Psychological/Emotional

- Enforced social isolation – preventing someone accessing services, educational and social opportunities and seeing friends.
- Removing mobility, or communication aids, or intentionally leaving someone unattended when they need assistance.
- Preventing someone from meeting their religious and cultural needs
- Preventing the expression of choice and opinion; failure to respect privacy.
- Preventing stimulation, meaningful occupation, or activities
- Intimidation, coercion, harassment, use of threats, humiliation, bullying, swearing or verbal abuse.
- Addressing a person in a patronising, or infantilising way
- Threats of harm, or abandonment
- Cyber bullying

Organisational

- Discouraging visits, or the involvement of relatives or friends
- Run-down, or overcrowded establishment
- Authoritarian management, or rigid regimes
- Lack of leadership and supervision
- Insufficient staff, or high turnover resulting in poor quality care
- Abusive and disrespectful attitudes towards people using the service
- Inappropriate use of restraints
- Lack of respect for dignity and privacy
- Failure to manage residents with abusive behaviour
- Not providing adequate food and drink, or assistance with eating
- Not offering choice, or promoting independence
- Misuse of medication
- Failure to provide care with dentures, spectacles, or hearing aids
- Not taking account of individuals' cultural, religious, or ethnic needs
- Failure to respond to abuse appropriately
- Interference with personal correspondence, or communication
- Failure to respond to complaints.

Radicalisation, including county lines.

Radicalisation is the process through which a person comes to support, or be involved in, extremist ideologies. It can result in a person becoming drawn into terrorism and is in itself a form of harm. Extremism is 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.

The process of radicalisation may involve:

- being groomed online, or in person
- exploitation, including sexual exploitation.
- psychological manipulation
- exposure to violent material and other inappropriate information
- the risk of physical harm, or death through extremist acts
- it is happening gradually so children and young people, who are affected, may not realise what it is that they are being drawn into
- County Lines is where illegal drugs are transported from one area to another, often across police and local authority boundaries (although not exclusively), usually by children, or vulnerable people who are coerced into it by gangs.
- The 'County Line' is the mobile phone line used to take the orders of drugs.

Honour Based Abuse

FGM

- FGM is not an issue that can be decided on by personal preference – it is an illegal, extremely harmful practice and a form of child abuse and violence against women and girls
- As FGM is a form of child abuse, professionals have a statutory obligation under national safeguarding protocols (e.g., Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 – revised 2020) to protect girls and women at risk of FGM
- Since October 2015 registered professionals in health, social care and teaching also have a statutory duty (known as the Mandatory Reporting duty) to report cases of FGM to the police non-emergency number 101 in cases where a girl under 18 either discloses that she has had FGM, or the professional observes physical signs of FGM

Faith/Belief-based harm including witchcraft abuse

- Abuse linked to faith or belief is where concerns for a child's welfare have been identified, and could be caused by, a belief in witchcraft, spirit or demonic possession, ritual or satanic abuse features; or when practices linked to faith, or belief, are harmful to a child.
- Any abuse that takes place against those who are branded (or labelled) either as a witch, or as having been possessed by an evil spirit, is unacceptable. Significant harm (including murder) can occur because of concerted efforts to 'excise' or 'deliver' evil from a child (or vulnerable adult)

Breast Ironing

- Breast ironing, also known as breast flattening, is the pounding and massaging of a pubescent girl's breasts, using hard or heated objects, to try to make them stop developing, or disappear
- The practice involves ironing a girl's chest with hot objects to delay breasts from growing, so she does not attract male attention
- It's typically carried out when the girls are aged between 11 and 15, as they enter puberty, and is often done by the victim's own family under the "misguided intention" of protecting her from rape and sexual harassment, according to the United Nations

Forced Marriage

Forcing any person into marriage is a crime in England and Wales. It includes non-binding, unofficial ceremonies, and legal marriages. From February 2023 it is a crime to carry out "any conduct" whose purpose is to cause a child to marry "before their 18th birthday" even if violence, coercion or threats are not used.

Appendix 5 – Young people missing from Care, including residential and fostering care and missing adults.

Going missing is a dangerous activity. A child or young person who goes missing just once faces the same immediate risks as faced by a child or young person who regularly goes missing. However, children who go missing when they are young (and/or more frequently) are more likely to face longer-term problems.

Definitions:

Missing Person: “A missing person is anyone whose whereabouts are unknown, whatever the circumstances of disappearance. He or she will be considered missing until located and his or her wellbeing, or otherwise, established.”

Runaway: A child or young person, who is absent from their home or placement without permission for any length of time where their age and experience, background and ability make this a concern or who has been forced to leave by their parents or carers.

Looked After Child or Young Person: A child is looked after by a local authority if s/he is “in care” by reason of a court order, or if s/he is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by agreement with her/his parents or with the child if s/he is aged 16 or more.

- If the child is subject to a Care Order or Interim Care Order (Section 31 of the Children Act, 1989), then Children’s Services acquire parental responsibility and become a legal parent alongside the parent/guardian.
- If the child is accommodated under S20 of the Children Act 1989, s/he is looked after by the Local Authority with the voluntary agreement of his/her parents, or with the child if s/he is over 16 years old. Parental responsibility remains with the parent/guardian.

Action must always be taken and there needs to be a prompt response involving the carers, social care staff and police officers.

Going missing should be treated as an indicator that the individual may be at risk of harm. The safeguarding of vulnerable people is paramount, and a missing person report should be recognised as an opportunity to identify and address risks. The reasons for a person deciding to go missing may be complex and linked to a variety of social or family issues.

Three key factors should be considered in a missing person investigation:

- protecting those at risk of harm.
- minimising distress and ensuring high quality of service to the families and carers of missing persons.
- prosecuting those who perpetrate harm or pose a risk of harm when this is appropriate and supported by evidence.”

If a child cannot be located but the parent/carer has any concern about their whereabouts or safety or a risk the child may pose to others, there should be no delay in calling the police and reporting the child as missing. As the training provider we have a duty of care for the child whilst in our care and we may report missing apprentices/learners directly to the police. This is particularly the case if the child has additional risk factors such as being neglected.

Appendix 6 – The Seven Golden Rules to Sharing Information



HM Government

The seven golden rules to sharing information:

(Information sharing - Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents, and carers)

1. Remember that the Data Protection Act 1998 and human rights law are not barriers to justified information sharing but provide a framework to ensure that personal information about living individuals is shared appropriately.
2. Be open and honest with the individual (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
3. Seek advice from other practitioners if you are in any doubt about sharing the information concerned, without disclosing the identity of the individual where possible.
4. Share with informed consent where appropriate and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You may still share information without consent if, in your judgement, there is good reason to do so, such as where safety may be at risk. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case. When you are sharing or requesting personal information from someone, be certain of the basis upon which you are doing so. Where you have consent, be mindful that an individual might not expect information to be shared.
5. Consider safety and well-being: Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the individual and others who may be affected by their actions.
6. Necessary, proportionate, relevant, adequate, accurate, timely and secure: Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those individuals who need to have it, is accurate and up to date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely (see principles).
7. Keep a record of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.