

**Safeguarding
Children, Adult
Learners & Vulnerable
Adults
Policy and Procedure
Guidelines**

**THIS POLICY SHOULD BE
AVAILABLE TO ALL STAFF
VOLUNTEERS, SERVICE
PROVIDERS AND VISITORS AT
ALL TIMES**

2026

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Effective From: 1st October 2013

Next review date: 31st December 2026



Signed:
Carla Warren – Continuous Improvement Manager

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, ADULT LEARNERS & VULNERABLE ADULTS STATEMENT

ProVQ Ltd

ProVQ is committed to ensuring that children, adult learners and vulnerable adults are safe and protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, exploitation and radicalisation. Leaders and Governors ensure that systems are in place for children, adult learners and vulnerable adults to report abuse, feel confident to safely express their views and give feedback and that their concerns will be treated seriously.

Our policy applies to all persons employed or volunteering within our organisation and should be read in conjunction with Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance.

We recognise our responsibility to respond appropriately and, with respect to children, adult learners and vulnerable adults, to work with other agencies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those groups with whom we have contact and to have clear guidelines for our procedures.

- **A child is defined as a person aged up to 18 years old.**
- **An adult is aged 18 years and over.**

1. We believe every child, adult learner and vulnerable adult should be valued, safe and happy. We want to make sure that these people we have contact with know this and are empowered to tell us if they are suffering harm.
2. We want children, adult learners and vulnerable adults who use or have contact with this organisation to enjoy what we have to offer in safety.
3. We want organisations that work with us or commission work from us, or who provide funding to us, to have confidence and recognise that we are a safe organisation and that we do not inadvertently fund or support extremist and terrorist activities.
4. We will achieve this by having effective safeguarding children, adult learners and vulnerable adults guidance, which includes guidance for safeguarding children from child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment and those children, adult learners and vulnerable adults who may be vulnerable to the risk of radicalisation.
5. We recognise the rights and freedoms set out in the Human Rights Act 1998, specifically:
 - right to freedom from inhuman & degrading treatment,
 - right to respect for private & family life including protection of individuals physical & physiological integrity.

We will apply these freedoms without discrimination and recognise all individuals rights to education.

6.
 - a. If we discover or suspect a child, adult learner and vulnerable adult is suffering harm which **is** directly related to the conduct of a staff member, volunteer, or other person related to our organisation we will, for children; notify

Shropshire Safeguarding Children Board - Initial Contact Team on 0345 678 9021

<http://www.safeguardingshropshireschildren.org.uk>

out of office hours:

The Emergency Duty Team on 0345 6789040.

For adults, notify The Safeguarding Adults Board, Access Team,

https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20086/adult_social_care_asc/3682/adult_safe_guarding

email access.team@telford.gov.uk or

telephone 01952 381280

- b. If we discover or suspect a child, adult learner and vulnerable adult is suffering harm which **is not** related to the conduct a staff member, volunteer, or other person related to our organisations we will, notify:

the LSCB Initial Contact team Children on 0345 678 9021, out of office hours -
Emergency Duty Team on 0345 6789040

or

Protecting Vulnerable People (West Mercia Police): 0300 333 3000

- c. If we discover or suspect that a child, adult learner or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm from radicalisation or being drawn into extremist or terrorist activities we will notify:

Alamgir Sheriyar - West Midlands Regional Prevent Co-ordinator

Alamgir.sheriyar@education.gov.uk

07468714372

Or

Sam Slack - East Midlands Regional Prevent Coordinator

sam.slack@education.gov.uk

07384452156

West Mercia Police [Prevent | West Mercia Police](#)

Channel referrals:

[Making a referral to Prevent - GOV.UK](#)

7. This Safeguarding Children, Adult Learners and Vulnerable Adults Policy Statement and our Safeguarding Children, Adult Learners and Vulnerable Adults guidance applies to all staff, volunteers and users of ProVQ Ltd and anyone carrying out any work for us or using our premises or that of our customers where our service delivery is directly provided.
8. **We will review our Safeguarding Children, Adult Learners and Vulnerable Adults policy and guidance against the Keeping Children safe in Education statutory guidance at least every 12 months to make sure they are still relevant and effective.**

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, ADULT LEARNERS AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

ProVQ Ltd

ProVQ will:

1. Arrange to take all reasonable measures to ensure the risks of harm to children, adult learners and vulnerable adults are minimised.
2. Take their duty of care seriously and put the interests and safety of children, adult learners and vulnerable adults first.
3. Ensure that there is a Prevent Implementation Policy in place.
4. Ensure that there is a whole organisation approach to safeguarding children from child on child sexual violence, sexual abuse and sexual harassment.
5. Arrange to take all appropriate actions to address concerns about the welfare of the child, or children, adult learners and vulnerable adults, working to agreed local policies and procedures in full partnership with other local services.
6. Ensure safe recruitment and employment practices are observed as we recognise this is an important part in safeguarding children, adult learners and vulnerable adults.
7. Have a named person within the organisation to take lead responsibility for implementing and leading safeguarding & Prevent across the organisation.

Emma Whitfield, Head of Operations – 07946483157 emma.whitfield@provq.com

In her absence:

Stuart Jones – Managing Director – 01743 762800 stuart@provq.com

8. Have named, trained, members of staff who can provide advice and support to other staff, liaise with other staff, and work with other agencies, who will be known as the Safeguarding & Prevent Designated People. All staff will be made aware of these roles:

The Safeguarding & Prevent Designated people for this organisation are:

Emma Whitfield	emma.whitfield@provq.com	07946483157
Brian James	brian.james@provq.com	07795 388122
James Haslam	james.haslam@provq.com	07775 936649
Adam Mee	adam.mee@provq.com	07717 432165
Martyn Goodwin	martyn.goodwin@provq.com	01743 762800
Nick Leah	nick.leah@provq.com	0115 9332600
Julian Johnson	julian.johnson@provq.com	01332 283932
Julie Jones	julie.jones@provq.com	01743 762800
Phil Walters	phil.walters@provq.com	07824 340174

9. Listen to children, adult learners and vulnerable adults, encourage them to respect and care for others and take action to stop any inappropriate verbal, physical or emotional abuse taking place.

10. Endeavour to create an open and accountable environment, permitting children adult learners, and vulnerable adults to voice their concerns about inappropriate behaviour and misconduct while providing strong sanctions to deter abuse, victimisation and cover up of serious malpractice
11. Ensure our policies and procedures apply to all staff (paid or unpaid), children, adult learners, vulnerable adults, parents and carers regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, Marriage & Civil partnership

ProVQ is aware of the responsibilities, which its directors, governors, managers, staff, volunteers & service providers have with regard to the protection of children, adult learners and vulnerable adults from abuse, including sexual abuse, and from inappropriate and inadequate care, and is committed to responding in all cases where there is concern.

ProVQ are aware that the Counter-Terrorism Act 2015 places duties upon us to prevent people from becoming radicalised and drawn into extremist and/or terrorist activities. ProVQ must incorporate this duty to existing policies and procedures to fulfil safeguarding responsibilities ensuring that there are clear and robust policies in place to identify and safeguard children, adult learners, and vulnerable adults at risk. ProVQ has risk assessed the organisation in respect of the Prevent Duty and a Prevent action plan has been drawn up to address the interventions required. ProVQ must also ensure that all staff and sub-contractors have a good understanding of Prevent and are trained to recognise vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism and are aware of the reporting mechanism to deal with it. ProVQ has made external links with:

- Andrew Gough – Shropshire Safer Communities & Channel Panel Chairperson
- Paul Fenn – Telford Prevent Lead & Channel Panel Chairperson
- Alamgir Sheriyar - West Midlands Regional Prevent Co-ordinator
- Sam Slack - East Midlands Regional Prevent Coordinator
- Nelson Ode – JISC Security Services Manager

ProVQ is working in partnership with these organisations to fulfil its obligations under the Prevent Duty.

This document will be shared with all staff and volunteers within their induction process to ensure they are familiar with the organisation's beliefs, guidelines and understand their responsibilities.

The documents below provide the framework for the organisations responsibilities as part of a co-ordinated shared response to the health and wellbeing of children, adult learners or vulnerable adults. All staff will be made aware of these documents and how they can access them.

- ❑ Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025
- ❑ Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- ❑ What to do if You're Worried a Child is Being Abused (2015)
- ❑ Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- ❑ Safeguarding Adults: A National Framework of Standards for Good Practice and Outcomes in Adult Protection Work
- ❑ Prevent Duty
- ❑ Channel Duty

Date Policy Agreed: 1/10/2013
 Next review date: 31/12/2026

Safeguarding Children, Adult Learners and Vulnerable Adults Guidance

This document has been designed to help staff, supply/temporary staff and volunteers know how to respond to situations where they may have concerns about the safety and wellbeing of a child, adult learner or vulnerable adult that they have contact with in any situation.

This document must be read in conjunction with Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education, Statutory Guidance for Schools and Colleges September 2025.

[Keeping children safe in education 2025: part one information for all school and college staff](#)

For the purposes of the guidance,

Safeguarding is defined as:

- Protecting children, adult learners and vulnerable adults from maltreatment,
- Preventing impairment of children's, adult learners and vulnerable adults mental and physical health or development;
- Ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe & effective care
- Taking action to enable children, adult learners, and vulnerable adults to have best outcomes.

A child is:

anyone under the age of 18.

An adult learner is:

Any learner over the age of 18 enrolled onto a programme of learning with ProVQ

A vulnerable adult is:

Anyone aged 18 years and over and who is receiving , or may be eligible to receive, support from social care or health services and who may be unable to take care of themselves, or be unable to protect themselves against serious harm or exploitation and whose independence and well-being would be, or is at risk if they did not receive appropriate health or social care support.

People who may be eligible include adults with mental ill-health, adults with physical disabilities and/or sensory impairments, and adults with learning disabilities. Other people to consider include adults who misuse substances, adults whose behaviour or condition puts them at risk of abuse, and victims of domestic violence who meet the above criteria.

Please note that just because someone is disabled in some way, or old or ill does not mean that they are unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from abuse. They may be perfectly able to do so. However, research has shown that anyone being cared for, either in a care setting or at home or by other services is, by definition, vulnerable. This is because the person is in a position of dependency on others.

Generally, the more dependent a person is on the assistance or support of others to carry out everyday activities of daily life the more vulnerable the person is likely to be. This is particularly so when there is also a degree of mental incapacity or mental disorder that affects the person's ability to make informed decisions and exercise choice.

Due to the nature of our work, ProVQ Ltd may be in the frontline of work with some children, adult learners and vulnerable adults. This may mean that we are the first to know that a child, adult learner or vulnerable adult has been abused or that we are concerned about a person's wellbeing. Everyone has an equal responsibility to ensure that the needs of children, adult learners and vulnerable adults are put first and to safeguard any person with whom we may come into contact. This responsibility rests not only with the Managing Director but also with every individual employed or volunteering or providing a service within our organisation whilst at work or at home.

It is essential that all staff, supply/temporary staff and volunteers know how to respond in these circumstances.

All staff, supply/temporary staff and volunteers must always endeavour to safeguard all children, adult learners and vulnerable adults from harm and exploitation whatever their:

- Race, Religion, First Language or Ethnicity
- Sex
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment or gender questioning
- Age
- Health, ill-health or disability
- Location or placement (e.g. living alone, in a hostel or residential unit, with their family or a foster family, as a tourist in a hotel, care home residents)
- Criminal or offensive behaviour
- Wealth or lack of it
- Political or immigration status
- Marriage & Civil partnership
- Pregnancy or maternity

All staff within the organisation need to be alerted to the potential abuse of children, adult learners, and vulnerable adults from child on child/peer on peer abuse, abuse within families and also from other sources including abuse by members of staff in our and other organisations.

Staff should know what to do if a child, adult learner, or vulnerable adults tells them he/she is being abused, neglected or exploited. Staff should know how to manage the requirement to maintain an appropriate level of confidentiality. This means only involving those who need to be involved, such as the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) and children's or adult services. Staff should never promise a child, adult learner, or vulnerable adult that they will not tell anyone about a report of abuse, as this may ultimately not be in the best interests of the individual.

Early help

Any child, adult learner or vulnerable adult may benefit from early help. Staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for an individual who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education, home or care,
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded from schools, colleges and in Alternative Provision or a Pupil Referral Unit.
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending

- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage is a privately fostered child

Confidentiality & Information sharing

It is important for all staff to follow the statement of confidentiality outlined below:

We treat all children, adult learners, vulnerable adults, carers, parents, and families with respect. Information that is given to us will be treated confidentially and shared only with those persons who have an agreed reason to have the information. Information will only be passed to other people with the agreed consent of the person giving the information, except if there are concerns about the welfare of a child, adult learner, or vulnerable adult. In these circumstances a discussion will be held with the designated person and if it is considered appropriate the information will be shared with professionals in the local authority/police/health services.

ProVQ recognises that information sharing is vital in identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect, and in the welfare and educational outcomes for children, adult learners and vulnerable adults. In order to meet an individual's needs ProVQ Leaders, Managers & Governors recognise the importance of information sharing between practitioners and local agencies. Where necessary, ProVQ staff should be proactive in sharing information as early as possible to help identify, assess and respond to risks or concerns about the safety and welfare of children, adult learners or vulnerable adults. All ProVQ staff are provided with regular GDPR training to ensure they have due regard to the relevant data protection principles, which allow them to share (and withhold)

The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR do not prevent the sharing of information for the purposes of keeping children safe. Fears about sharing information must not be allowed to stand in the way of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare and protect the safety of children.

See Myth-busting guide to information sharing in Annex A.

Recognising and responding to Abuse:

All staff should know how to recognise, and act upon, indicators of abuse or potential abuse involving children, adult learners and vulnerable adults. There is an expected responsibility for all members of the organisation to respond to any suspected or actual abuse of a child, adult learner, or vulnerable adult in accordance with the procedures provided. All staff should be aware that children, adult learners and vulnerable adults may not feel ready to know how to tell someone that they are being abused exploited or neglected and/or they may not recognise their experiences as harmful.

Immediate Action

Immediate action may be necessary at any stage in involvement with children, adult learners, and vulnerable adults.

It is always good practice to be as open and honest as possible with parents/carers about any concerns.

IN ALL CASES IT IS VITAL TO TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IS NECESSARY TO SAFEGUARD A CHILD.ADULT LEARNER OR VULNERABLE ADULT. THIS MAY INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- If emergency medical attention is required, this can be secured by calling an ambulance (dial 999) or taking a child, adult learner or vulnerable adult to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department. In the case of a child, it would be appropriate for a responsible person or designated adult to accompany the child to hospital.
- If a child, adult learner, or vulnerable adult is in immediate danger the police should be contacted (dial 999) as they alone have the power to remove a child immediately if protection is necessary, via a Police Protection Order.

Recognition of Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation

Knowing what to look for is vital to the early identification of abuse, neglect and exploitation. All staff should be aware of indicators of abuse, neglect and exploitation, so that they are able to identify cases of individuals who may be in need of help or protection. If staff are unsure, they should always speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

Staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, exploitation and safeguarding issues are rarely stand-alone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another.

Safeguarding incidents and/or behaviours can be associated with factors outside the training environment and/or can occur between children, adult learners, and vulnerable adults outside of these environments. All staff, but especially the designated safeguarding lead (and deputies) should consider whether children, adult learners and vulnerable adults are at risk of abuse or exploitation in situations outside their families. Extra-familial harms take a variety of different forms and children, adult learners and vulnerable adults can be vulnerable to multiple harms including (but not limited to) sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and serious violence.

'Abuse, neglect and exploitation' is a generic term encompassing all ill treatment of children or vulnerable adults, including serious physical and sexual assaults as well as cases where the standard of care does not adequately support the person's health or development.

Abuse, neglect and exploitation are forms of maltreatment of a vulnerable person. Somebody may abuse an individual by inflicting harm, or by failing to prevent harm.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 sets out definitions and examples of four broad categories of abuse:

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Neglect

These categories overlap and an abused person does frequently suffer more than one type of abuse (e.g. an individual may be suffering physical and emotional abuse). The definitions below encompass all groups covered by this policy.

Indicators of abuse and neglect

Abuse:

A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child, adult learner or vulnerable adult by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children, adult learners or vulnerable adults of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear or experience its effects.

Children, adult learners or vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults or by another child or children

Physical abuse: a form of abuse which may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child, adult learner or vulnerable adult. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child or vulnerable adult.

Emotional abuse: the persistent emotional maltreatment of an individual such as to cause severe and adverse effects on that individual's emotional development. It may involve conveying to the individual that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the individual opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children or vulnerable adults. These may include interactions that are beyond the individual's developmental capability as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning or preventing the individual from participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children, adult learners or vulnerable adults frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, adult learner or vulnerable adult although it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse: involves forcing or enticing an individual to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the individual is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse. Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children. The sexual abuse of children by other children (Peer on Peer abuse) is a specific safeguarding issue in education.

Peer on peer abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or

group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support.

Sexual behaviours across a continuum:

Early help can be particularly useful to address non-violent Harmful Sexual Behaviours and may prevent escalation of sexual violence.

Normal	Inappropriate	Problematic	Abusive	Violent
Developmentally expected	Single instances of inappropriate sexual behaviour	Problematic & concerning behaviour	Victimising intent or outcome	Physically violent sexual abuse
Socially acceptable	Socially acceptable behaviour within peer group	Developmentally unusual & socially unexpected	Includes misuse or power	Highly intrusive
Consensual, mutual, reciprocal	Context for behaviour may be inappropriate	No overt elements of victimisation	Coercion and force to ensure victim compliance	Instrumental violence that is psychologically and/or sexually arousing to the perpetrator
Shared decision making	Generally consensual & reciprocal	Consent issues may be unclear	Intrusive Informed consent lacking or not able to be freely given by the victim	Sadism
		May lack reciprocity or equal power		
		May include levels of compulsivity	May include elements of expressive violence	

Source: Hackett, S, "children, young people and sexual violence" in *children behaving badly? Exploring peer violence between children & young people 2010*

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are extremely complex to manage. It is essential that victims are protected, offered appropriate support and every effort is made to ensure their education is not disrupted. It is also important that other children, adult learners and staff are supported and protected as appropriate.

Neglect: the persistent failure to meet an individual's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the individual's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy, for example, as a result of maternal substance abuse. Neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
- protect a child/vulnerable adult from physical and emotional harm or danger.
- ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers);
- ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child or vulnerable adult's basic emotional needs.

Signs of Possible Abuse

When considering whether there is evidence to suggest an individual has been abused, there are a number of possible indicators (listed below). However, there *may* be other explanations, so it is important not to jump to conclusions but rather seek advice from Children's/Adult Services or the Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit, in the case of adult learners and vulnerable adults, contact Adult Services. There may also be no signs or symptoms, this does not mean that a report of abuse is false.

Signs Suggesting Physical Abuse

- Any injuries not consistent with the explanation given for them
- Injuries that occur to the body in places, which are not normally exposed to falls, rough games etc.
- Injuries that have not received medical attention
- Neglect – under nourishment, failure to grow, constant hunger, stealing or gorging food, untreated illnesses, inadequate care etc.
- Reluctance to change for, or participate in, games or swimming
- Repeated urinary infections or unexplained tummy pains.
- Bruises, bites, burns, fractures etc that do not have an accidental explanation*
- Cuts/scratches/substance abuse*
- Changes in routine

Indicators of Possible Sexual Abuse

- Any allegations made by a person concerning sexual abuse
- Person with excessive preoccupation with sexual matters and detailed knowledge of adult sexual behaviour, or who regularly engages in age-inappropriate sexual play
- Sexual activity through words, play or drawing
- Child or vulnerable adult who is sexually provocative or seductive with adults
- Inappropriate bed-sharing arrangements at home
- Severe sleep disturbances with fears, phobias, vivid dreams or nightmares, sometimes with overt or veiled sexual connotations
- Eating disorders – anorexia, bulimia*
- Bed wetting and soiling

Signs Suggesting Emotional Abuse

- Changes or regression in mood or behaviour, particularly where an individual withdraws or becomes clingy – also depression/aggression, extreme anxiety
- Nervousness, frozen watchfulness
- Obsessions or phobias
- Sudden under-achievement or lack of concentration
- Inappropriate relationships with peers and/or adults, carers or family
- Attention-seeking behaviour
- Persistent tiredness
- Running away/stealing/lying

*** These signs may also indicate the possibility that a child, adult learner or vulnerable adult is self-harming**

Concerns of a General Nature/Not Relating to a Specific Individual

There may be instances where concerns do not relate to a specific individual. It may be that there are concerns in respect of institutional abuse or neglect within a service, and this may affect a number of people who use that service. Concerns do not need to be specific to an individual in order to alert. The duty of care remains the same whether alerting concerns involving one individual, several individuals or service-related issues that may affect many people.

Safeguarding issues

All staff should have an awareness of safeguarding issues that can put children at risk of harm. Behaviours linked to issues such as:

- drug taking and or alcohol misuse,
- unexplainable and/or persistent absences from education
- serious violence (including that linked to county lines)
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos (previously known as Sexting or Youth Produced Sexual Imagery)

can be signs that children are at risk.

Other safeguarding issues all staff should be aware of include:

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)
- So called “honour-based” abuse Including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) & forced marriage
- Mental health
- Serious violence (gangs and youth violence)
- Peer on peer/child on child abuse
- Child abduction & community safety incidents
- Children and the court system
- Children missing from education
- Children with family members in prison
- County lines
- Modern slavery & trafficking
- Cybercrime
- Domestic abuse

- Homelessness
- Radicalisation & terrorism
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools & colleges
- Upskirting

See Annex B, C & D for more information.

What is Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)?

Both CSE and CCE are forms of abuse that occur where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance in power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child into taking part in sexual or criminal activity, in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or through violence or the threat of violence. CSE and CCE can affect children, both male and female and can include children who have been moved (commonly referred to as trafficking) for the purpose of exploitation.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

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.

Further information about CCE including definitions and indicators is included in Annex B

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 non-contact 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 e.g. through others sharing videos or images of them on social media.

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 e.g. they believe they are in a genuine romantic relationship.

Further information about CSE including definitions and indicators is included in Annex B.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Whilst all staff should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) with regard to any concerns about female genital mutilation (FGM), there is a specific legal duty on teachers.

If a staff member, in the course of their work, discovers that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, they must report this to the police.

See Annex B for further details

Mental Health

ProVQ has an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of its learners. All staff should be aware that mental health problems can, in some cases, be an indicator that an individual has suffered or is at risk of suffering abuse, neglect or exploitation.

Only appropriately trained professionals should attempt to make a diagnosis of a mental health problem. Staff, however, are well placed to identify those whose day-to-day behaviour suggests that they may be experiencing a mental health problem or be at risk of developing one.

Where individuals have suffered abuse and neglect, or other potentially traumatic adverse childhood experiences, this can have a lasting impact throughout childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. It is important that staff are aware of how these children's experiences, can impact on their mental health, behaviour and education.

If staff have a mental health concern about a child, adult learner or vulnerable adult that is also a safeguarding concern, immediate action should be taken by speaking to the designated safeguarding lead or a deputy.

Further guidance and information can be found at:

[Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/promoting-and-supporting-mental-health-and-wellbeing-in-schools-and-colleges)

What is Peer on peer abuse?

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer-on-peer abuse). And that it can happen both inside and outside of the training environment and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of peer-on-peer abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

All staff should understand, that even if there are no reports of peer on peer abuse it does not mean it is not happening; it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding peer on peer abuse, they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, many of which are listed below, that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Peer on peer abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- **bullying** (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying).
- **abuse** in intimate personal relationships between peers.
- **physical abuse** such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- **sexual violence**, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- **sexual harassment**, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse.
- **causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent**, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.
- **consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos** (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery).
- **upskirting**, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
- **initiation/hazing type violence and rituals** (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

All staff should report all incidents of peer-on-peer abuse. Research has found that individuals are unlikely to report instances of peer on peer abuse so it is important that staff stay vigilant to what is happening and report anything that they observe, in accordance with ProVQ's Safeguarding & Prevent Incident Reporting Processes.

What is Serious violence?

All staff should be aware of indicators, which may signal that children, adult learners or vulnerable adults are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime. These may include increased absence from work & training, a change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups, a significant decline in performance, signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing, or signs of assault or unexplained injuries. Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation.

All staff should be aware of the range of risk factors which increase the likelihood of involvement in serious violence, such as:

- being male,
- having been frequently absent or permanently excluded from school,
- having experienced child maltreatment and
- having been involved in offending, such as theft or robbery.

Further advice is provided in the Home Office's [Preventing youth violence and gang involvement](#) and its [Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines](#) guidance.

It is important to explain to children that the law is in place to protect people and young people rather than criminalise them & this should be explained in such a way that avoids alarming or distressing them.

Radicalisation, Extremism & Terrorist Activities:

Definitions:

- An **Ideology** is a set of beliefs.
- **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
- **Terrorism** is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat **must** be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.
- **Extremism** is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

Factors that might make someone vulnerable to radicalisation:

What Factors Might Make Someone Vulnerable?

In terms of personal vulnerability, the following factors may make individuals susceptible to exploitation. None of these are conclusive in themselves and therefore should not be considered in isolation but in conjunction with the particular circumstances and any other signs of radicalisation.

Isolation and Identity crisis

Adolescents/vulnerable adults who are exploring issues of identity can feel both distant from their parents/family and cultural and religious heritage, and uncomfortable with their place in society around them. Where there are feelings of isolation and loneliness, radicalisers can exploit this by providing a sense of purpose or feelings of belonging. Where this occurs, it can often manifest itself in a change in a person's behaviour, their circle of friends, and the way in which they interact with others and spend their time.

Personal Crisis and Personal Circumstances

This may, for example, include significant tensions within the family that produce a sense of isolation of the vulnerable individual from the traditional certainties of family life. The experience of migration, local tensions or events affecting families in countries of origin may contribute to alienation from UK values and a decision to cause harm to symbols of the community or state.

Grievances

The following are examples of grievances which may play an important part in the early indoctrination of vulnerable individuals into the acceptance of a radical view and extremist ideology:

- a misconception and/or rejection of UK foreign policy
- a distrust of western media reporting
- perceptions that UK government policy is discriminatory (e.g. counter-terrorist legislation)
- perception that their aspirations for career and lifestyle is undermined by limited employment prospects
- the 'world owes them a favour'
- other factors

Similarly, to the above, the following have also been found to contribute to vulnerable people joining certain groups supporting terrorist-related activity:

- ideology and politics and/or youth rebellion
- provocation and anger (grievance)
- need for protection
- seeking excitement and action
- fascination/morbid interest in violence, weapons and uniforms
- seeking family and father substitutes
- seeking friends and community, status and identity.

The process of exploitation (grooming):

There is no single profile or indication of a person who is likely to become involved in terrorist-related activity or rationale as to why vulnerable individuals become involved. The factors surrounding exploitation are many and they are unique for each person. The increasing body of information indicates that factors thought to relate to personal experiences of vulnerable individuals affect the way in which they relate to their external environment. In this sense, vulnerable individuals may be exploited in many ways to radicalisers who target the vagaries of their vulnerability. Contact with radicalisers is also variable and can take a direct form, i.e. face to face, or can happen indirectly through the internet, social networking or other media. More commonly this will occur through a combination of the above.

Contact with radicalisers

It is generally more common for vulnerable individuals to become involved in terrorist related activity through the influence of others. Initial contact may be via peers, siblings, other family members or acquaintances, however throughout the COVID 19 pandemic there has been a significant increase in individuals self-radicalising & individuals being radicalised online.

Access to extremist material is often through leaflets and local contacts. However, the internet plays an important role in the communication of extremist views. It provides a platform for extremists to promote their cause and encourage debate through websites, internet forums and social networking, and is a swift and effective mechanism for disseminating propaganda material. Organisations should be aware of anyone making frequent visits to websites showing images such as armed conflict around the world and providing speeches and access to material from those involved in the radicalising process.

Use of extremist rationale (often referred to as narrative)

Radicalisers usually attract people to their cause through a persuasive rationale within a storyline or narrative that has the potential to influence views. Inspiring new recruits, embedding the beliefs of those with established extreme views and/or persuading others of the legitimacy of their cause is the primary objective of those who seek to radicalise vulnerable individuals.

Staying safe on line:

It is essential that children, adult learners and vulnerable adults are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, 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, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism, misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories
- 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: personal 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; and
- commerce - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

ProVQ has in place additional policies in relation to keeping learners and staff safe whilst online. All staff should ensure that they are familiar with the following policies:

- Online Safety Policy
- Learner Acceptable use of Technology Agreement
- Staff Acceptable use of Technology Policy
- Social Media Policy

See Annex C for further details

What to do if children, adult learners or vulnerable adults talk to you about a safeguarding issue:

It is recognised that a child, adult learner or a vulnerable adult may seek out an adult to share information about a safeguarding issue with or talk spontaneously either individually or in groups when an adult is present. In these situations, staff members or volunteers must:

- Listen carefully to the child or adult, and don't ask leading questions.
- Give the child or adult time and attention.
- Allow the child or adult to give a spontaneous account; do not stop them when they are freely recalling significant events.
- Make an accurate record of the information given taking care to record the timing, setting and people present, the child or adult's presentation as well as what was said. Do not throw this away as it may later be needed as evidence.
- Use the child or adult's own words where possible.
- Explain that they cannot promise not to speak to others about the information they have shared.
- Reassure the child or adult that:
 - You are glad they have told them.
 - S/he has not done anything wrong.
 - What you are going to do next.
 - Explain that you will need to get help to keep them safe.
 - You must NOT ask the child or adult to repeat his or her account of events to anyone.

Consulting about the concern –

The purpose of consultation is to discuss concerns in relation to a child or adult and decide what action is necessary. Staff or volunteers may become concerned about an individual who has not spoken directly to them, because of something they have observed, or information they have heard about an individual.

If a child or adult is upset or has a visible injury it is good practice to ask them why they are upset or how a cut or bruise was caused or respond to a child or adult who wants to talk. This practice can help clarify vague concerns and result in appropriate action.

If staff members are concerned about a child or adult, they must share their concerns. Initially they should talk to a ProVQ Safeguarding & Prevent Designated Person:

Emma Whitfield	emma.whitfield@provq.com	07946 483157
Brian James	brian.james@provq.com	07795 388122
James Haslam	james.haslam@provq.com	07775 936649
Adam Mee	adam.mee@provq	07717 432165
Martyn Goodwin	martyn.goodwin@provq.com	01743 762800
Nick Leah	nick.leah@provq.com	0115 9332600
Julian Johnson	julian.johnson@provq.com	01332 283932
Julie Jones	Julie.jones@provq.com	01743 762800
Phil Walters	phil.walters@provq.com	07824 340174

If a member of our staff or a volunteer is implicated in any concerns about a child, adult learner or vulnerable adult, staff should discuss their concerns directly with:

Emma Whitfield – Head of Operations – 07946483157 – emma.whitfield@provq.com

In her absence:

Stuart Jones – Managing Director – 01743 762800 - stuart@provq.com

Who will raise the concerns with:

Shropshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) Independent Review
Unit, Shropshire Council, Mount McKinley, Anchorage Avenue, Shrewsbury Business Park
Shrewsbury, SY2 6FG <http://www.safeguardingshropshireschildren.org.uk> , email:
sscb@shropshire.gov.uk, Telephone: 01743 254259

For adults, notify The Safeguarding Adults Board, Access Team,
www.telford.gov.uk, email access.team@telford.gov.uk or telephone 01952 381280

Staff members and volunteers should consult externally with the LSCB or Safeguarding Adults Board in the following circumstances:

- When they remain unsure after internal consultation as to whether child or vulnerable adult protection concerns exist
- When there is disagreement as to whether child or vulnerable adult protection concerns exist
- When they are unable to consult promptly or at all with the designated internal contact for child or vulnerable adult protection
- When the concerns relate to any staff member within ProVQ

Staff members and volunteers should consult externally with the Regional Prevent Lead FE & in the following circumstances:

- When they remain unsure after internal consultation as to whether an issue around racialisation and/or extremism exists
- When there is disagreement as to whether an issue around racialisation and/or extremism exists
- When they are unable to consult promptly or at all with the designated internal contacts for Prevent

Consultation is not the same as making a referral, but this should help a decision to be made as to whether a referral to Children's or Adult Services, Channel or the Police should progress.

Making a referral

A referral involves giving children's/adult services or the police information about concerns relating to a child, adult learner, vulnerable adult or family in order that enquiries can be undertaken by the appropriate agency followed by any necessary action. In certain cases, the level of concern will lead straight to a referral without external consultation being necessary.

Parents/carers should be informed if a referral is being made **except** in circumstances where it is considered that informing parents/carers would place a child, adult learner, vulnerable adult, yourself or others at immediate risk.

However, inability to inform parents for any reason should not prevent a referral being made. It would then become a joint decision with children's or adult services about how and when the parents or carers should be approached and by whom.

If the concern is about abuse or risk of abuse from someone not known to the child or child's family, adult learner or vulnerable adult (stranger abuse) make a telephone referral directly to the police and advise the parents or carers.

If the concern is about abuse or risk of abuse from a family member or someone known to the child, adult learner or vulnerable adult, make a telephone referral to the LSCB Initial Contact team on 0345 678 9021

If the concern is about the risk of radicalisation, extremism or terrorism refer to the Government website:

[Making a referral to Prevent - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/prevent)

Information required

Staff should be prepared to give as much of the following information as possible (in emergency situations all of this information may not be available). Unavailability of some information should not stop anyone making a referral.

- Provide your name, telephone number, position and request the same details from the person to whom you are speaking.
- Full name and address, telephone number of family, date of birth of child, adult learner or vulnerable adult and siblings.
- Gender, ethnicity, first language, any special needs.
- Names, dates of birth and relationship of household members and any significant others.
- The names of any professionals known to be involved with the child, adult learner, or vulnerable adult/family e.g.: GP, Health Visitor, School.
- The nature of the concerns, and reason for them.
- Your opinion on whether the child, adult learner or vulnerable adult may need urgent action to make them safe.

- Your view of what appears to be the needs of the child, adult learner, vulnerable adult and family or carers.
- Whether the parent, carer or person with parental responsibility has given their consent to the referral being made.

Action to be taken following the referral

Ensure that an accurate record is made and kept, detailing the concerns that have been referred.

Make sure the concerns are confirmed in writing to the Referral and Assessment Team or Adult Duty Team following the referral (within 48 hours).

Accurately record the action agreed or that no further action is to be taken and the reasons for this decision.

Confidential Records of Concern

Ensure that any records in respect of the children, adult learners or vulnerable adults, their parents and/or carers are kept confidential in a secure place. Information should only be shared on a need to know basis. Where the sharing of information is vital to protect a child, adult learner or vulnerable adult the issue of confidentiality is secondary to their need for protection.

IF YOU ARE IN DOUBT, CONSULT.

What to do if you have concerns about Safeguarding practices within ProVQ

All staff and volunteers should feel able to raise concerns about poor or unsafe practice and potential failures in ProVQ's safeguarding regime and know that any such concerns will be taken seriously by Directors. Staff and volunteers with concerns should raise them in accordance with the ProVQ Disclosures in the Public Interest (Whistleblowing) Policy.

Where a staff member or volunteer feels unable to raise an issue with Directors, or feels that their genuine concerns are not being addressed, other whistleblowing channels are open to them: The NSPCC's what you can do to report abuse dedicated helpline is available as an alternative route for staff who do not feel able to raise concerns regarding child protection failures internally, or have concerns about the way a concern is being handled by ProVQ. [Whistleblowing Advice Line | NSPCC](#), Staff can call 0800 028 0285 – line is available from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM, Monday to Friday and email: help@nspcc.org.uk.

Safer Recruitment and Selection Activity

ProVQ will take all possible steps to prevent unsuitable people working with children, adult learners or vulnerable adults.

When interviewing potential staff, we will ensure:

- There is an open recruitment process
- There is a rigorous interview
- Staff on the interview panel have completed Safer Recruitment training
- Applicants' identity and claims to any 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 potential employee will be sought

- Where appropriate, an enhanced disclosure via the Disclosure and Barring Service will be secured

Where a position requires an enhanced disclosure, this will be clear on the application form, job advert and any other information provided about the post. 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.

All candidates shortlisted for roles which involve regulated activity are required to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children. This will enable candidates to share relevant information and allow this to be discussed and considered at interview before the DBS certificate is received.

During interviews the interview panel will explore:

- The candidate's attitude toward children, adult learners and vulnerable adults
- His or her ability to support the organisations agenda for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, adult learners and vulnerable adults
- Any gaps in the candidate's employment history
- Any concerns or discrepancies arising from the information provided by the candidate and/or referee

All job offers will be conditional until all of the mandatory pre-employment checks are satisfactorily completed.

All staff will have a job description and contract of employment and be required to work a probationary period.

Post Appointment

All staff and volunteers (paid or unpaid), regardless of previous experience will take part in an induction programme during their first three months of employment.

The purpose of this will be to:

- Provide training about our policies and procedures
- To provide support to individuals in the role for which they have been engaged
- To provide opportunities for a new member of staff or volunteer to discuss any issues or concerns about their role or responsibilities
- To enable the person's line manager, supervisor or mentor to recognise any concerns about the person's ability or suitability at the outset and address them immediately
- To ensure that the individual is aware of policies, procedures and statements in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, adult learners or vulnerable adults
- To ensure that individuals understand how and with whom they should raise any concerns with regard to any practice issues
- To ensure that individuals are aware of other relevant procedures, e.g. disciplinary, capability and whistle blowing
- To ensure that all staff and volunteers have appropriate levels of training in safeguarding children, adult learners or vulnerable adults and other responsibilities in connection with their role
- To ensure that all staff and volunteers have appropriate levels of training in the Prevent Duty in connection with their role
- To advise individuals about supervision and appraisal systems

Allegations Against Staff, supply staff, Volunteers & contractors / Whistleblowing

Allegations are usually addressed in two areas:

1. Allegations that a child, adult learner or vulnerable adult is being harmed by a member of staff, is known as Allegations Management
2. General allegations of wrongdoing are known as Whistleblowing

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure they do not abuse their positions of trust within our organisation. Any concerns raised by a member of staff/volunteer or a member of the public regarding inappropriate behaviour by any member of this organisation will be managed via the following procedure and all allegations will be acted on.

Allegations Management – (Also see Keeping Children Safe in Education Part 4, sections 1 & 2)
There are procedures in place to manage safeguarding concerns, or allegations against staff (including supply staff and volunteers) that might indicate they would pose a risk of harm to children, which include fulfilling our legal duty to make a referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) if a person in regulated activity has been dismissed or removed due to safeguarding concerns, or would have been had they not resigned. Allegations against staff no longer working for the organisation, or allegations of historical abuse will be referred to the police.

Where it is alleged that anyone working with children under the age of 18 has:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a child, or may have harmed a child;
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or related to a child;
- behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he or she may pose a risk of harm to children; or
- behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children

This will be reported Stuart Jones – Managing Director– 01743 762800– stuart@provq.com In his absence the designated lead person will be Emma Whitfield, Head of Operations – 07946483157 – emma.whitfield@provq.com

who will inform the Shropshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) Independent Review Unit, Shropshire Council, Mount McKinley, Anchorage Avenue, Shrewsbury Business Park, Shrewsbury, SY2 6FG <http://www.safeguardingshropshireschildren.org.uk>, email: sscb@shropshire.gov.uk, Telephone: 01743 254259. The LSCB will advise on how to proceed, whether the matter can be dealt with within our organisation's own internal arrangements or whether a multi-agency strategy meeting is required.

In relation to vulnerable adults, notify The Safeguarding Adults Board, Access Team, www.telford.gov.uk, email access.team@telford.gov.uk or telephone 01952 381280.

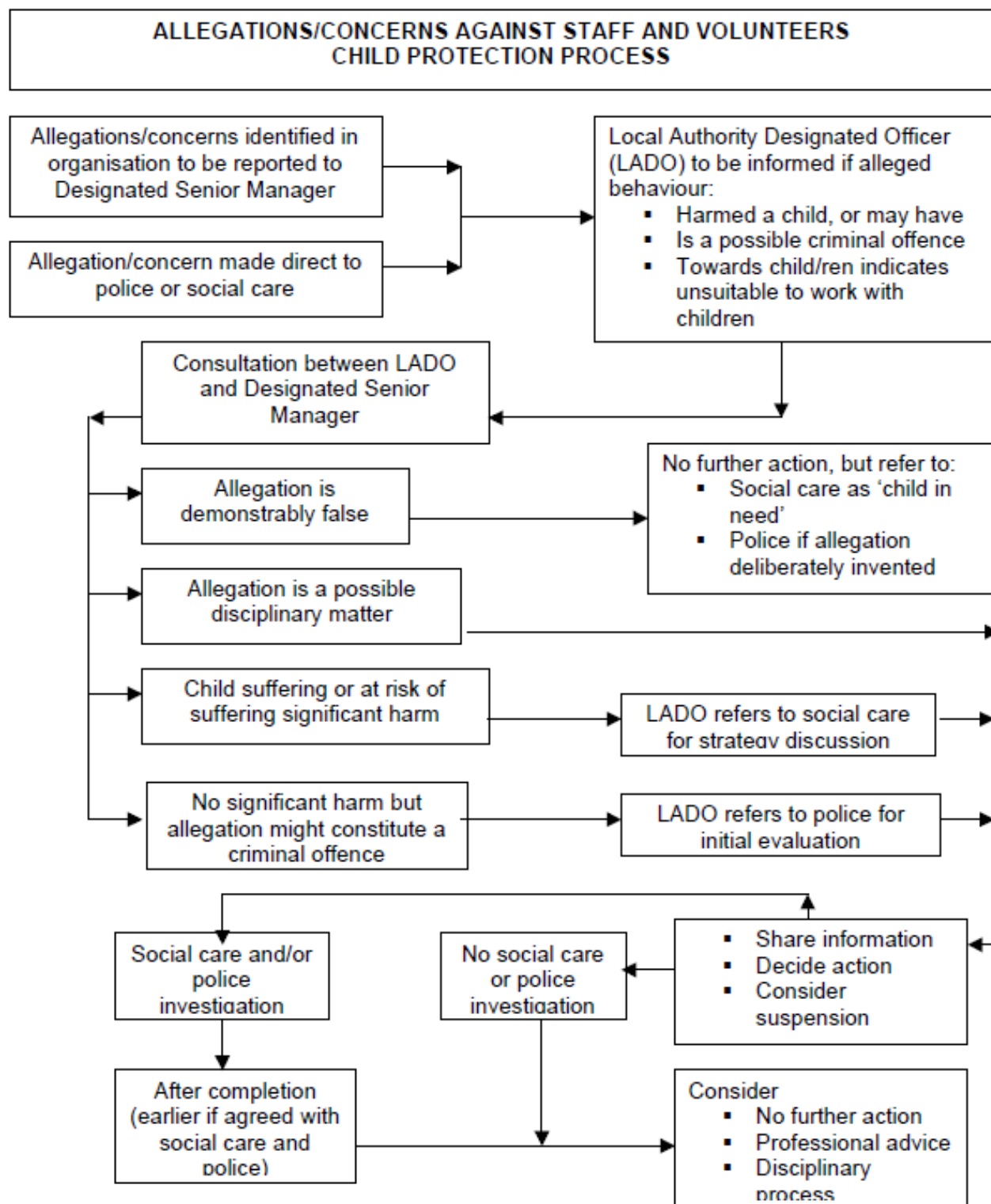
Where the LADO/ Adult Protection Team decides that the issue can be dealt with internally, the reasoning and advice will be recorded and sent to (Depending upon who is dealing with the case)

Stuart Jones – Managing Director – 01743 762800– stuart@provq.com

In his absence the designated lead person will be Emma Whitfield, Head of Operations – 07946483157 – emma.whitfield@provq.com

Where the Safeguarding Boards decides the case needs to proceed to a 'Strategy Discussion Meeting', they will make a referral to Social Care and/or police and convene the meeting/s in accordance with their guidance.

Complaints made directly to the police will be reported to the Safeguarding Board as soon as possible and they will decide whether to hold a strategy meeting. The Police may interview the complainant if they feel this is appropriate.



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Whistleblowing

Members of staff may be the first to notice if anything is seriously wrong within the organisation. However, they might not say anything because they think this would be disloyal, or they might be worried that their suspicions are not justified. They may also be worried that they or someone else may be victimised.

If anyone wants to raise any concern, they can do so with confidence and without having to worry about being victimised, discriminated against or disadvantaged in any way as a result. Members of the public should also be encouraged to voice any concerns they raise officially.

What types of action does this include?

This policy is intended to deal with **serious or sensitive concerns about wrongdoings such as the following:**

- Fraud or corruption
- Member groups, children and adults in our care, being mistreated
- Unauthorised use of money
- An unlawful act
- Any danger to health and safety
- A person abusing their position for any unauthorised use or for personal gain
- A person deliberately not keeping to a policy, a code of practice or any law or regulation
- A person failing to meet appropriate standards
- A person being discriminated against because of their race, colour, religion, ethnic or national origin, disability, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy & maternity, marriage & civil partnership, class or home life

The concern may be about members of staff, or other people who work directly for or with the organisation, as part of a collaborative/partnership agreement.

What is not covered?

Whistleblowing policies cannot be used to deal with serious or sensitive matters that are covered by other procedures.

Such procedures include the following –

- Staff complaints about their employment. These complaints should be dealt with through the Grievance Procedure.

Whistle-blowers should be made to feel confident in using the policy to raise issues as where an allegation is true, they have nothing to fear. Let them know that, if necessary, you will take appropriate action under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 to protect them from any harassment, victimisation or bullying.

You will keep their concerns confidential if this is what they want, unless you are unable to by law. Explain this at the time they raise a concern so they can decide whether or not to proceed.

Anonymous Allegations

Let people know that because you will protect them (as explained above), you encourage them to give their name when they make an allegation. Concerns raised anonymously tend to be far less effective and if, for example, you do not have enough information, you may not be able to investigate the matter at all.

In his absence the designated lead person will be Emma Whitfield, Head of Operations – 07946483157 – emma.whitfield@provq.com

These will decide whether or not to consider the matter. The decision will depend on:

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

Any member of staff or volunteer raising a concern should first do so with their manager or the nominated person, this will depend on the seriousness and sensitivity of the matter, and who is suspected of the wrongdoing.

Concerns are better put in writing giving as much information as possible – including any relevant names, dates, places and so on. The earlier the issue is raised, the easier it will probably be to take effective action.

A person raising a concern will not have to prove beyond all reasonable doubt that the allegation is true, but they will have to show that there are good reasons for their concern.

Code of Behaviour

All staff and volunteers are expected to behave in a manner, which reflects the child, adult learner and vulnerable adult-centred principles of our organisation. This good practice will be reinforced during staff development and training sessions.

Working with children, adult learners and vulnerable adults

It is essential that care is taken to minimise the possibility for abuse and misunderstanding and misinterpretation. False allegations are rare but general good practice will help prevent them. The following examples will help to create a positive culture and climate for children, adult learners and vulnerable adults who visit our premises.

- Never work alone with children, adult learners or vulnerable adults out of public view. Leaders should not ask staff/volunteers to work with these groups in situations where staff/volunteers will be completely unobserved
- Maintain a safe and appropriate emotional and physical distance from children, adult learners or vulnerable adults. It is not appropriate for staff or volunteers to have an intimate relationship with children, adult learners or vulnerable adults who visit our premises
- Do not engage in rough or sexually provocative games
- Do not make sexual comments
- Do not invite or allow children, adult learners or vulnerable adults into your home
- Do not give children, adult learners or vulnerable adults lifts in your car except in emergencies (unless this is part of your job and you have written authorisation to do so)

- Never engage in communication with children, adult learners or vulnerable adults using personal phones, personal email addresses or personal social media accounts
- Never let allegations, made by anyone, go unacknowledged, unresolved or not acted upon

Staff/volunteers should be aware of the potential for misunderstanding when touching children, adult learners or vulnerable adults.

If it is an accepted part of an activity, touching should be appropriate to the situation and follow accepted guidelines where they exist. Consoling a child, adult learner or vulnerable adult who is upset, administering first aid or supporting a participant in an activity is acceptable and necessary behaviour.

Assessing the Risks:

ProVQ is committed to safeguarding children, adult learners and vulnerable adults effectively, and carries out safeguarding risk assessments to minimise the risks to children, adult learners and vulnerable adults from any potential harm or damage. ProVQ has a Safeguarding and Prevent Risk Assessment that is updated on an annual basis, or more frequently if necessary.

Staff training

ProVQ Leaders and Governors ensure that all staff undergo safeguarding training during induction. This includes online safety and an understanding of the expectations, applicable roles and responsibilities in relation to filtering and monitoring. Staff are updated on a regular basis to provide them with relevant skills and knowledge to safeguard children effectively.

Learners are taught about safeguarding, including online safety as part of the whole organisation approach to safeguarding and curriculum planning. All learners are made aware of how to raise and report anything that they are concerned about.

Complaints

It is reasonable for children, vulnerable adults, parents and carers to have the right to complain or make comment if they are unhappy with the care or service they receive. ProVQ Ltd takes the care of children, adult learners and vulnerable adults seriously and will address any concerns that are raised.

Receiving complaints and comments about our organisation also helps us to understand the things that we do well and where there are areas that need to be improved.

If anyone would like to complain or comment about any aspect of our organisation it is important to take this seriously and direct them in the first instance to complete a complaints form. If they are reluctant to do this or the situation is regarded as serious the comments should be recorded in writing and brought to the immediate attention of Emma Whitfield, Head of Operations – 07946483157 – emma.whitfield@provq.com

Annex A

Myth-busting guide to information sharing

Sharing information enables practitioners and agencies to identify and provide appropriate services that safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Below are common myths that may hinder effective information sharing.

Data protection legislation is a barrier to sharing information	No – the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR do not prohibit the collection and sharing of personal information, but rather provide a framework to ensure that personal information is shared appropriately. In particular, the Data Protection Act 2018 balances the rights of the information subject (the individual whom the information is about) and the possible need to share information about them.
Consent is always needed to share personal information	No – you do not need consent to share personal information. It is one way to comply with the data protection legislation but not the only way. The GDPR provides a number of bases for sharing personal information. It is not necessary to seek consent to share information for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of a child provided that there is a lawful basis to process any personal information required. The legal bases that may be appropriate for sharing data in these circumstances could be 'legal obligation', or 'public task' which includes the performance of a task in the public interest or the exercise of official authority. Each of the lawful bases under GDPR has different requirements. It continues to be good practice to ensure transparency and to inform parent/ carers that you are sharing information for these purposes and seek to work cooperatively with them.
Personal information collected by one organisation/agency cannot be disclosed to another	No – this is not the case, unless the information is to be used for a purpose incompatible with the purpose for which it was originally collected. In the case of children in need, or children at risk of significant harm, it is difficult to foresee circumstances where information law would be a barrier to sharing personal information with other practitioners.
The common law duty of confidence and the Human Rights Act 1998 prevent the sharing of personal information	No – this is not the case. In addition to the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR, practitioners need to balance the common law duty of confidence and the Human Rights Act 1998 against the effect on individuals or others of not sharing the information.
IT Systems are often a barrier to effective information sharing	No – IT systems, such as the Child Protection Information Sharing project (CP-IS), can be useful for information sharing. IT systems are most valuable when practitioners use the shared data to make more informed decisions about how to support and safeguard a child.

(Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 - pg 21)

Annex B

This Annex contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues. Managers and those staff who work directly with children should read this annex.

If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately by speaking to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy).

Where a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer from significant harm, it is important that a referral to children's social care (and if appropriate the police) is made immediately.

Child abduction and community safety incidents

Child abduction is the unauthorised removal or retention of a minor from a parent or anyone with legal responsibility for the child. Child abduction can be committed by parents or other family members; by people known but not related to the victim (such as neighbours, friends and acquaintances); and by strangers. Other community safety incidents in the vicinity of a school can raise concerns amongst children and parents, for example, people loitering nearby or unknown adults engaging children in conversation. As children get older and are granted more independence (for example, as they start walking to school on their own) it is important they are given practical advice on how to keep themselves safe. Many schools provide outdoor-safety lessons run by teachers or by local police staff. It is important that lessons focus on building children's confidence and abilities rather than simply warning them about all strangers.

Further information is available at: www.actionagainstabduction.org and www.clevernevergoes.org.

Children and the court system

Children are sometimes required to give evidence in criminal courts, either for crimes committed against them or for crimes they have witnessed. There are two age appropriate guides to support children:

5-11-year olds [Young witness booklet for 5 to 11 year olds - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

12-17 year olds. [Young witness booklet for 12 to 17 year olds - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

The guides explain each step of the process, support and special measures that are available. There are diagrams illustrating the courtroom structure and the use of video links is explained. Making child arrangements via the family courts following separation can be stressful and entrench conflict in families. This can be stressful for children. The Ministry of Justice has launched an online child arrangements information tool [Get help with child arrangements - Get help with child arrangements \(justice.gov.uk\)](http://www.justice.gov.uk) with clear and concise information on the dispute resolution service. This may be useful for some parents and carers.

Children missing from Education

All staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance

abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of their school's or college's unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures

Children with family members in prison

Approximately 200,000 children in England and Wales have a parent sent to prison each year. These children are at risk of poor outcomes including poverty, stigma, isolation and poor mental health. The National Information Centre on Children of Offenders, [NICCO](#) provides information designed to support professionals working with offenders and their children, to help mitigate negative consequences for those children

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) & Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

We know that different forms of harm often overlap, and that perpetrators may subject children and young people to multiple forms of abuse, such as criminal exploitation (including county lines) and sexual exploitation. In some cases the exploitation or abuse will be in exchange for something the victim needs or wants (for example, money, gifts or affection), and/or will be to the financial benefit or other advantage, such as increased status, of the perpetrator or facilitator.

Children can be exploited by adult males or females, as individuals or in groups. They may also be exploited by other children, who themselves may be experiencing exploitation – where this is the case, it is important that the child perpetrator is also recognised as a victim. Whilst the age of the child may be a contributing factor for an imbalance of power, there are a range of other factors that could make a child more vulnerable to exploitation, including:

- sexual identity,
- cognitive ability,
- learning difficulties,
- communication ability,
- physical strength,
- status, and
- access to economic or other resources.

Some of the following can be indicators of both child criminal and sexual exploitation where children:

- appear with unexplained gifts, money or new possessions.
- associate with other children involved in exploitation.
- suffer from changes in emotional well-being.
- misuse drugs and alcohol.
- go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
- regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education.

Children who have been exploited will need additional support to help maintain them in education. CSE can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time and range from opportunistic to

complex organised abuse. It can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence. Some additional specific indicators that may be present in CSE are children who:

- have older boyfriends or girlfriends; and
- suffer from sexually transmitted infections, display sexual behaviours beyond expected sexual development or become pregnant.

Further information on signs of a child's involvement in sexual exploitation is available in Home Office guidance: [Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/346422/Child_sexual_exploitation_definition_and_guide_for_practitioners_-_GOV.UK.pdf) networks involve

County Lines

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of "deal line". This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK - no specified distance of travel is required.

Children and vulnerable adults are exploited to move, store and sell drugs and money. Offenders will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons to ensure compliance of victims. Children can be targeted and recruited into county lines in a number of locations including schools (mainstream and special), further and higher educational institutions, pupil referral units, children's homes and care homes. Children are also increasingly being targeted and recruited online using social media.

Children can easily become trapped by this type of exploitation as county lines gangs can manufacture drug debts which need to be worked off or threaten serious violence and kidnap towards victims (and their families) if they attempt to leave the county lines network. A number of the indicators for CSE and CCE as detailed above may be applicable to where children are involved in county lines. Some additional specific indicators that may be present where a child is criminally exploited through involvement in county lines are children who:

- go missing and are subsequently found in areas away from their home.
- have been the victim or perpetrator of serious violence (e.g. knife crime);
- are involved in receiving requests for drugs via a phone line, moving drugs, handing over and collecting money for drugs.
- are exposed to techniques such as 'plugging', where drugs are concealed internally to avoid detection.
- are found in accommodation that they have no connection with, often called a 'trap house or cuckooing' or hotel room where there is drug activity.
- owe a 'debt bond' to their exploiters;
- have their bank accounts used to facilitate drug dealing.

Further information on the signs of a child's involvement in county lines is available in guidance published by the Home Office. [Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/346422/Criminal_Exploitation_of_children_and_vulnerable_adults_-_County_Lines_guidance.pdf)

Modern Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism

Modern slavery encompasses human trafficking and slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour. Exploitation can take many forms, including sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude, forced criminality and the removal of organs. Further information on the signs that someone may be a victim of modern slavery, the support available to victims and how to refer them to the NRM is available in the Modern Slavery Statutory Guidance. Modern slavery: how to identify

Cybercrime

Cybercrime is criminal activity committed using computers and/or the internet. It is broadly categorised as either 'cyber-enabled' (crimes that can happen off-line but are enabled at scale and at speed on-line) or 'cyber dependent' (crimes that can be committed only by using a computer). Cyber-dependent crimes include.

- unauthorised access to computers (illegal 'hacking'), for example accessing a school's computer network to look for test paper answers or change grades awarded.
- denial of Service (Dos or DDoS) attacks or 'booting'. These are attempts to make a computer, network or website unavailable by overwhelming it with internet traffic from multiple sources; and,
- making, supplying or obtaining malware (malicious software) such as viruses, spyware, ransomware, botnets and Remote Access Trojans with the intent to commit further offence, including those above.

Children with particular skill and interest in computing and technology may inadvertently or deliberately stray into cyber-dependent crime. If there are concerns about a child in this area, the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy), should consider referring into the **Cyber Choices** programme. This is a nationwide police programme supported by the Home Office and led by the National Crime Agency, working with regional and local policing. It aims to intervene where young people are at risk of committing, or being drawn into, low level cyber-dependent offences and divert them to a more positive use of their skills and interests. Note that Cyber Choices does not currently cover 'cyber-enabled' crime such as fraud, purchasing of illegal drugs on-line and child sexual abuse and exploitation, nor other areas of concern such as on-line bullying or general on-line safety.

Additional advice can be found at:

[Cyber Choices: Helping you choose the right and legal path - National Crime Agency](#) '
[National Cyber Security Centre - NCSC.GOV.UK](#)

Domestic Abuse

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021. The Act introduces the first ever statutory definition of domestic abuse and recognises the impact of domestic abuse on children, as victims in their own right, if they see, hear or experience the effects of abuse. The statutory definition of domestic abuse, based on the previous cross-government definition, ensures that different types of relationships are captured, including ex-partners and family members. The definition captures a range of different abusive behaviours, including physical, emotional and economic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour. Both the person who is carrying out the behaviour and the person to whom the behaviour is directed towards must be aged 16 or over and they must be "personally connected" (as defined in section 2 of the 2021 Act).

Types of domestic abuse include intimate partner violence, abuse by family members, teenage relationship abuse and child/adolescent to parent violence and abuse. Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, regardless of sexual identity, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexuality or background and domestic abuse can take place inside or outside of the home. Domestic abuse can encompass a wide range of behaviours and maybe a single incident or a patten of incidents.

The government will issue statutory guidance to provide further information for those working with domestic abuse victims and perpetrators, including the impact on children.

All children can be victims of and/or witness domestic abuse and be adversely affected by domestic abuse in the context of their home life where domestic abuse occurs between family members. Experiencing domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result.

Young people can also experience domestic abuse within their own intimate relationships. This form of peer-on-peer abuse is sometimes referred to as 'teenage relationship abuse'. Depending on the age of the young people, this may not be recognised in law under the statutory definition of 'domestic abuse' (if one or both parties are under 16). However, as with any child under 18, where there are concerns about safety or welfare, child safeguarding procedures should be followed and both young victims and young perpetrators should be offered support. The Act's provisions, including the new definition, will be commenced over the coming months.

Operation Encompass

[Operation Encompass](#) operates in all police forces across England. It helps police and schools work together to provide emotional and practical help to children. The system ensures that when police are called to an incident of domestic abuse, where there are children in the household who have experienced the domestic incident, the police will inform the key adult (usually the designated safeguarding lead) in school before the child or children arrive at school the following day. This ensures that the school has up to date relevant information about the child's circumstances and can enable immediate support to be put in place, according to the child's needs. Operation Encompass does not replace statutory safeguarding procedures. Where appropriate, the police and/or schools should make a referral to children's social care if they are concerned about a child's welfare. More information about the scheme and how schools can become involved is available on the Operation Encompass website.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

Refuge runs the National Domestic Abuse Helpline, which can be called free of charge and in confidence, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247. Its website provides guidance and support for potential victims, as well as those who are worried about friends and loved ones. It also has a form through which a safe time from the team for a call can be booked. Additional advice on identifying children who are affected by domestic abuse and how they can be helped is available at:

- [NSPCC- UK domestic-abuse Signs Symptoms Effects](#)
- [Refuge what is domestic violence/effects of domestic violence on children](#)
- [Safelives: young people and domestic abuse.](#)
- [Domestic abuse: specialist sources of support - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) (includes information for adult victims, young people facing abuse in their own relationships and parents experiencing child to parent violence/abuse)
- [Home : Operation Encompass](#) (includes information for schools on the impact of domestic abuse on children)

Homelessness

Being homeless or being at risk of becoming homeless presents a real risk to a child's welfare. The designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of contact details and referral routes into the Local Housing Authority so they can raise/progress concerns at the earliest opportunity. Indicators that a family may be at risk of homelessness include household debt, rent arrears, domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as the family being asked to leave a property. Whilst referrals and/or discussion with the Local Housing Authority should be progressed as appropriate, and in accordance with local procedures, this does not, and should not, replace a

referral into children's social care where a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 places a new legal duty on English councils so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness will have access to meaningful help including an assessment of their needs and circumstances, the development of a personalised housing plan, and work to help them retain their accommodation or find a new place to live.

The following factsheets usefully summarise the new duties: [Homeless Reduction Act Factsheets](#).

The new duties shift focus to early intervention and encourage those at risk to seek support as soon as possible, before they are facing a homelessness crisis.

In most cases school and college staff will be considering homelessness in the context of children who live with their families, and intervention will be on that basis. However, it should also be recognised in some cases 16 and 17 year olds could be living independently from their parents or guardians, for example through their exclusion from the family home, and will require a different level of intervention and support. Children's social care will be the lead agency for these children, and the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy) should ensure appropriate referrals are made based on the child's circumstances. The Department and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have published joint statutory guidance on the provision of accommodation for 16 and 17 year olds who may be homeless and/or require accommodation: [here](#).

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (including Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage)

So-called 'honour-based' abuse (HBA) encompasses incidents or crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, and practices such as breast ironing. Abuse committed in the context of preserving "honour" often involves a wider network of family or community pressure and can include multiple perpetrators. It is important to be aware of this dynamic and additional risk factors when deciding what form of safeguarding action to take. All forms of HBA are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. Professionals in all agencies, and individuals and groups in relevant communities, need to be alert to the possibility of a child being at risk of HBA, or already having suffered HBA.

Actions:

If staff have a concern regarding a child that might be at risk of HBA or who has suffered from HBA, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy). As appropriate, they will activate local safeguarding procedures, using existing national and local protocols for multi-agency liaison with police and children's social care. Where FGM has taken place, since 31 October 2015 there has been a mandatory reporting duty placed on teachers that requires a different approach (see the following section).

FGM

FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting harmful consequences.

FGM mandatory reporting duty for teachers

Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as inserted by section 74 of the Serious Crime Act 2015) places a statutory duty upon **teachers** along with regulated health and social care professionals in England and Wales, to report to the police where they discover (either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) that FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl under 18. Those failing to report such cases may face disciplinary sanctions. It will be rare for teachers to see visual evidence, and they should **not** be examining pupils or students, but the same definition of what is meant by “to discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out” is used for all professionals to whom this mandatory reporting duty applies. Information on when and how to make a report can be found at: [Mandatory reporting of female genital mutilation procedural information](#).

Teachers **must** personally report to the police cases where they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out. Unless the teacher has good reason not to, they should still consider and discuss any such case with the school’s or college’s designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) and involve children’s social care as appropriate. The duty does not apply in relation to at risk or suspected cases (i.e. where the teacher does not discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out, either through disclosure by the victim or visual evidence) or in cases where the woman is 18 or over. In these cases, teachers should follow local safeguarding procedures. The following is a useful summary of the FGM mandatory reporting duty: [FGM Fact Sheet](#).

Further information can be found in the [Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation](#) and the [FGM resource pack](#) particularly section 13.

Forced marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered into without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter into a marriage. Threats can be physical or emotional and psychological. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some perpetrators use perceived cultural practices as a way to coerce a person into marriage. Schools and colleges can play an important role in safeguarding children from forced marriage.

Since February 2023 it has also been a crime to carry out any conduct whose purpose is to cause a child to marry before their eighteenth birthday, even if violence, threats or another form of coercion are not used. As with the existing forced marriage law, this applies to non-binding, unofficial ‘marriages’ as well as legal marriages.

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) has created: Multi-agency practice guidelines: handling cases of forced marriage (pages 32-36 of which focus on the role of schools and colleges) and, Multi-agency statutory guidance for dealing with forced marriage, which can both be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/forced-marriage>. School and college staff can contact

the Forced Marriage Unit if they need advice or information: Contact: 020 7008 0151 or email fmufcdo.gov.uk.

Preventing radicalisation

Children are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Similar to protecting children from other forms of harms and abuse, protecting children from this risk should be a part of a schools' or colleges' safeguarding approach.

- **Extremism** is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.
- **Radicalisation** refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
- **Terrorism** is an action that endangers or causes serious violence to a person/people; causes serious damage to property; or seriously interferes or disrupts an electronic system. The use or threat **must** be designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public and is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause.

There is no single way of identifying whether a child is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a child's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media or the internet) and settings (such as within the home).

However, it is possible to protect vulnerable people from extremist ideology and intervene to prevent those at risk of radicalisation being radicalised. As with other safeguarding risks, staff should be alert to changes in children's behaviour, which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection. Staff should use their judgement in identifying children who might be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately which may include the designated safeguarding lead (or deputy) making a Prevent referral.

The school's or college's designated safeguarding lead (and any deputies) should be aware of local procedures for making a Prevent referral.

The Prevent duty

All schools and colleges are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter- Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (the CTSA 2015), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent duty.

The Prevent duty should be seen as part of schools' and colleges' wider safeguarding obligations. Designated safeguarding leads and other senior leaders should familiarise themselves with the revised [Prevent duty guidance: for England and Wales](#), especially paragraphs 57-76, which are specifically concerned with schools (and also covers childcare). The guidance is set out in terms of four general themes: risk assessment, working in partnership, staff training, and IT policies.

There is additional guidance: [Prevent duty guidance: for further education institutions](#) in England and Wales that applies to colleges.

Channel

Channel is a voluntary, confidential support programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent

referrals may be passed to a multi-agency Channel panel, which will discuss the individual referred to determine whether they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and consider the appropriate support required. A representative from the school or college may be asked to attend the Channel panel to help with this assessment. An individual's engagement with the programme is entirely voluntary at all stages.

Guidance on Channel is available at: [Channel guidance](#).

Additional support

The department has published further advice for schools on the [Prevent duty](#). The advice is intended to complement the Prevent guidance and signposts to other sources of advice and support.

The Home Office has developed three e-learning modules:

- [Prevent awareness e-learning](#) offers an introduction to the Prevent duty.
- [Prevent referrals e-learning](#) supports staff to make Prevent referrals that are **robust, informed** and with **good intention**.
- [Channel awareness e-learning](#) is aimed at staff who may be asked to contribute to or sit on a multi-agency Channel panel.

[Educate Against Hate](#), is a government website designed to support schoolteachers and leaders to help them safeguard their students from radicalisation and extremism. The platform provides free information and resources to help school staff identify and address the risks, as well as build resilience to radicalisation.

For advice specific to further education, the Education and Training Foundation (ETF) hosts the [Prevent for FE and Training](#). This hosts a range of free, sector specific resources to support further education settings comply with the Prevent duty. This includes the Prevent Awareness e-learning, which offers an introduction to the duty, and the Prevent Referral e-learning, which is designed to support staff to make robust, informed and proportionate referrals.

The ETF Online Learning environment provides online training modules for practitioners, leaders and managers, support staff and governors/Board members outlining their roles and responsibilities under the duty.

Peer on peer/ child on child abuse

Children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer-on-peer abuse) and it can take many forms. It **can** happen both inside and outside of school/college and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of peer-on-peer abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports. This **can** include (but is not limited to): bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying); abuse within intimate partner relationships; physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm; sexual violence and sexual harassment; consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos; causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party; upskirting and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals. Addressing inappropriate behaviour (even if it appears to be relatively innocuous) **can** be an important intervention that helps prevent problematic, abusive and/or violent behaviour in the future.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of **any** age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable.

It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- challenging inappropriate behaviours.
- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “Part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and,
- challenging physical behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

What is sexual violence and sexual harassment?

Sexual violence

It is important that school and college staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way and that it can happen both inside and outside of school/college. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual violence offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

Rape: A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault: A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (Schools should be aware that sexual assault covers a very wide range of behaviour so a single act of kissing someone without consent or touching someone’s bottom/breasts/genitalia without consent, can still constitute sexual assault.)

Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent: A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally causes another person (B) to engage in an activity, the activity is sexual, B does not consent to engaging in the activity, and A does not reasonably believe that B consents. (This could include forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party.)

What is consent? Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity, and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

Further information about consent can be found here: [Rape Crisis England & Wales - Sexual consent](#)

- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity.
- the age of consent is 16.
- sexual intercourse without consent is rape.

Sexual harassment

When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline and both inside and outside of school/college. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child-on-child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names.
- sexual "jokes" or taunting.
- physical behaviour, such as deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
 - consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos. As set out in [UKCIS Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people](#) (which provides detailed advice for schools and colleges) taking and sharing nude photographs of U18s is a criminal offence
- [Home - Shore](#) – A safe space for teenagers worried about sexual behaviour

Up skirting

The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which is commonly known as the Upskirting Act, came into force on 12 April 2019. 'Upskirting' is where someone takes a picture under a person's clothing (not necessarily a skirt) without their permission and or knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear) to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is a criminal offence. Anyone, of any gender, can be a victim.

The response to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment

The initial response to a report from a child is incredibly important. How the school or college responds to a report can encourage or undermine the confidence of future victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment to report or come forward. Schools and colleges not recognising, acknowledging or understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and/or downplaying of some behaviours can actually lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

If staff have a concern about a child or a child makes a report to them, they should follow the referral process as set out in paragraph 50 in Part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025. As is always the case, if staff are in any doubt as to what to do, they should speak to the designated safeguarding lead (or a deputy).

Annex C

Online Safety

The use of technology has become a significant component of many safeguarding issues. Child sexual exploitation; radicalisation; sexual predation: technology often provides the platform that facilitates harm. An effective approach to online safety empowers a school or college to protect and educate the whole school or college community in their use of technology and establishes mechanisms to identify, intervene in, and escalate any incident where appropriate.

The breadth of issues classified within online safety is considerable, 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, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, extremism misinformation, disinformation (including fake news) and conspiracy theories
- 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: personal 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; and
- commerce - risks such as online gambling, inappropriate advertising, phishing and or financial scams.

Education

Resources that could support schools and colleges to teach safeguarding including on-line safety include:

- [Education for a connected world framework](#) from the UK Council for Internet Safety supports the development of the curriculum and is of particular relevance to RSHE education and Computing. It is designed, however, to be usable across the curriculum and beyond (covering early years through to age 18) and to be central to a whole school or college approach to safeguarding and online safety.
- [PSHE association](#) provides guidance to schools on developing their PSHE curriculum
- [Teaching online safety in school](#) is departmental guidance outlining how schools can ensure their pupils understand how to stay safe and behave online as part of existing curriculum requirements
- [CEOP Education](#) – Provides information, guidance and resources for support for parents and carers, helping them to protect their child(ren) from online sexual abuse
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) developed guidance and resources that can help with the

teaching of the online safety component of the Computing Curriculum.

- [Teaching online safety in schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-online-safety-in-schools) DfE advice for schools: teaching online safety in schools
- [Education for a Connected World - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/uk-council-for-internet-safety-ukcis-37-guidance) UK Council for Internet Safety (UKCIS)37 guidance
- [Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sharing-nudes-and-semi-nudes-advice-for-education-settings-working-with-children-and-young-people) UKCIS guidance: Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people
- [Using External Visitors to Support Online Safety Education: Guidance for Educational Settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/using-external-visitors-to-support-online-safety-education-guidance-for-educational-settings) The UKCIS external visitors guidance will help schools and colleges to ensure the maximum impact of any online safety sessions delivered by external visitors
- [Mental wellbeing | Overview | PHE School Zone](https://www.phe.gov.uk/topics/mentalwellbeing/overview/) Public Health England
- [Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/harmful-online-challenges-and-online-hoaxes) Harmful online challenges and online hoaxes - this includes advice on preparing for any online challenges and hoaxes, sharing information with parents and carers and where to get help and support.

Protecting children

Governing bodies and proprietors should be doing all that they reasonably can to limit children's exposure to the above risks from the school's or college's IT system. As part of this process, governing bodies and proprietors should ensure their school or college has appropriate filters and monitoring systems in place.

Whilst considering their responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and provide them with a safe environment in which to learn, governing bodies and proprietors should consider the age range of their pupils, the number of pupils, how often they access the IT system and the proportionality of costs vs risks.

The appropriateness of any filters and monitoring systems are a matter for individual schools and colleges and will be informed in part, by the risk assessment required by the Prevent Duty. The UK Safer Internet Centre has published guidance as to what "appropriate" filtering and monitoring might look like: [UK Safer Internet Centre: appropriate filtering and monitoring](https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/what-we-do/our-services/parental-controls).

Guidance on e-security is available from the [National Education Network](https://www.nen.org.uk/). Support for schools is available via the: [schools' buying strategy](https://www.nen.org.uk/schools-buying-strategy) with specific advice on procurement here: [buying for schools](https://www.nen.org.uk/buying-for-schools).

Whilst filtering and monitoring is an important part of the online safety picture for schools and colleges to consider; it is only one part. Governors and proprietors should consider a whole school or college approach to online safety. This will include a clear policy on the use of mobile technology in the school or college. Many children have unlimited and unrestricted access to the internet via 3G, 4G and 5G in particular and the school and college should carefully consider how this is managed on their premises.

Whilst it is essential that governing bodies and proprietors ensure that appropriate filters and monitoring systems are in place, they should be careful that “over blocking” does not lead to unreasonable restrictions as to what children can be taught with regard to online teaching and safeguarding.

Reviewing online safety

Technology in this area evolves and changes rapidly. A free online safety self-review tool for schools can be found via the [360 safe website](#). UKCIS has published [Online safety in schools and colleges: Questions for the governing board](#) to help responsible bodies assure themselves that their online safety arrangements are effective.

Staff training

Governors and proprietors should ensure that, as part of the requirement for staff to undergo regularly updated safeguarding training and the requirement to ensure children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety that online safety training for staff is integrated, aligned and considered as part of the overarching safeguarding approach.

Information and support

There is a wealth of information available to support schools, colleges and parents/carers to keep children safe online. The following list is not exhaustive but should provide a useful starting point:

Advice for governing bodies/proprietors and senior leaders

- [Educateagainsthate](#) provides practical advice and support on protecting children from extremism and radicalisation
- [London Grid for Learning](#) provides advice on all aspects of a school or college’s online safety arrangements
- [NSPCC](#) provides advice on all aspects of a school or college’s online safety arrangements
- [Safer recruitment consortium](#) “guidance for safe working practice”, which may help ensure staff behaviour policies are robust and effective
- [Searching screening and confiscation](#) is departmental advice for schools on searching children and confiscating items such as mobile phones
- [South West Grid for Learning](#) provides advice on all aspects of a school or college’s online safety arrangements
- [Use of social media for online radicalisation](#) - A briefing note for schools on how social media is used to encourage travel to Syria and Iraq
- UK Council for Internet Safety have provided advice on [sexting-in-schools-and-colleges](#) and [using-external-visitors-to-support-online-safety-education](#)

Remote education, virtual lessons and live streaming

Support for children

- [Childline](#) for free and confidential advice
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) to report and remove harmful online content
- [CEOP](#) for advice on making a report about online abuse

Parental support

- [Childnet](#) offers a toolkit to support parents and carers of children of any age to start discussions about their online life, to set boundaries around online behaviour and technology use, and to find out where to get more help and support
- [Commonsensemedia](#) provide independent reviews, age ratings, & other information about all types of media for children and their parents
- [Government advice](#) about protecting children from specific online harms such as child sexual abuse, sexting, and cyberbullying
- [Government advice](#) about security and privacy settings, blocking unsuitable content, and parental controls
- [Internet Matters](#) provide age-specific online safety checklists, guides on how to set parental controls on a range of devices, and a host of practical tips to help children get the most out of their digital world
- [London Grid for Learning](#) provides support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online, including tips to keep primary aged children safe online
- [Lucy Faithfull Foundation StopItNow](#) resource can be used by parents and carers who are concerned about someone's behaviour, including children who may be displaying concerning sexual behaviour (not just about online)
- [National Crime Agency/CEOP Thinkuknow](#) provides support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Parentzone](#) provides help for parents and carers on how to keep their children safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) provide tips, advice, guides and other resources to help keep children safe online

Annex D

Additional advice and support

Abuse

- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abused](#) – DfE advice
- [Domestic abuse: Various Information/Guidance](#) - Home Office (HO)
- [Faith based abuse: National Action Plan](#) - DfE advice
- [Relationship abuse: disrespect nobody](#) - Home Office website
- [Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy](#) – Home Office policy paper

Bullying

- [Preventing bullying including cyberbullying](#) - DfE advice

Children missing from education, home or care

- [Children missing education](#) - DfE statutory guidance
- [Child missing from home or care](#) - DfE statutory guidance
- [Children and adults missing strategy](#) - Home Office strategy

Children with family members in prison

- [National Information Centre on Children of Offenders](#) - Barnardo's in partnership with HM Prison and Probation Service

Child Exploitation

- [Trafficking: safeguarding children](#) - DfE and HO guidance
- [Care of unaccompanied and trafficked children](#) – DfE statutory guidance
- [Modern slavery: how to identify and support victims](#) – HO statutory guidance

Drugs

- [Drug strategy 2017](#) - Home Office strategy
- [Information and advice on drugs](#) - Talk to Frank website
- [Drug and Alcohol education — teacher guidance & evidence review](#) – PSHE Association website

(so called) “Honour Based Abuse” including FGM and forced marriage

- [Female genital mutilation: information and resources-](#) Home Office guidance
- [Female genital mutilation: multi agency statutory guidance](#) - DfE, DH, and HO statutory guidance
- [Forced marriage](#) - Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) statutory guidance
- [FGM resource pack](#) – HM Government guidance

Health and Well-being

- [Fabricated or induced illness: safeguarding children](#) - DfE, DH, HO
- [Rise Above: Free PSHE resources on health, wellbeing and resilience](#) - Public Health England

- [Medical-conditions: supporting pupils at school](#) - DfE statutory guidance
- [Mental health and behaviour](#) - DfE advice

Homelessness

- [Homelessness: How local authorities should exercise their functions](#) - Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government guidance

Private fostering

- [Private fostering: local authorities](#) - DfE statutory guidance

Radicalisation

- [Prevent duty guidance](#)- Home Office guidance
- [Prevent duty: additional advice for schools and childcare providers](#) - DfE advice
- [Educate Against Hate website](#) - DfE and Home Office advice
- [Prevent for FE and Training](#) - Education and Training Foundation (ETF)

Violence

- [Serious violence strategy](#) - Home Office Strategy
- [Factors linked to serious violence and how these factors can be used to identify individuals for intervention](#) – Home Office
- [Gangs and youth violence: for schools and colleges](#) - Home Office advice
- [Ending violence against women and girls 2016-2020 strategy](#) - Home Office strategy
- [Violence against women and girls: national statement of expectations for victims](#) - Home Office guidance
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#)- DfE advice
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Special Educational Needs:

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Support Services (SENDIASS). SENDIASS offer information, advice and support for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND. All local authorities have such a service:

Find your local IAS service (councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)

- Mencap - Represents people with learning disabilities, with specific advice and information for people who work with children and young people
- NSPCC - Safeguarding children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and NSPCC - Safeguarding child protection/deaf and disabled children and young people