

Safeguarding Policy

1 General

- 1.1 This Safeguarding Policy sets out the Skills and Education Group Awards¹ approach to preventing and reducing harm to children and adults at risk.
- 1.2 We are a charity, registered with the Charities Commission. Trustees recognise and acknowledge the role we have to proactively safeguard and promote the welfare of our charity's beneficiaries (learners). Trustees will, therefore, ensure that reasonable steps are taken to ensure that learners and/or others who come into contact with our charity do not, as a result, come to harm. As part of this approach, this policy will be monitored as part of the governance of the charity.
- 1.3 We recognise our legal and ethical responsibility to protect children and adults at risk with whom the organisation and our representatives come into contact. This includes helping to protect them from the possibility of abuse and taking appropriate action when we become aware of cases of suspected abuse.
- 1.4 This policy applies to all our representatives in relation to our activities and assessments. For the purposes of this policy, and its implementation, a representative is defined as a trustee, any permanent or temporary member of staff, any assessor or any other person whose activities and/or reason for coming into contact with vulnerable groups is defined or controlled by us.
- 1.5 Although we have a contractual agreement with our centres to provide assessment, this in no way negates the primary responsibility of the Head of Centre to assess the risks to their learners and to ensure that appropriate safeguarding measures are in place.
- 1.6 We expect all representatives to learn about protection issues in accordance with the relevant statutory guidance and within the context of their own roles and responsibilities.

2 Policy

- 2.1 In adopting this policy, we recognise the following rights of the child or adult at risk:
 - to be given the support required to be healthy, safe and achieve through learning;

¹ ABC Awards is a brand of Skills and Education Group Awards, a recognised awarding organisation and part of the Skills and Education Group. Any reference to ABC Awards, its registered address, company or charity number should be deemed to mean the Skills and Education Group Awards.

- to have equal rights to protection from abuse and exploitation;
- to expect the support of all adults in their needs for care and protection from harm or abuse;
- to be able to study for and obtain qualifications without fear of abuse, harm or neglect.

2.2 In trying to help deliver these rights, we will:

- promote and prioritise the safety and wellbeing of children and adults at risk;
- require employees and representatives to adopt the policy, ensure that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities in respect of safeguarding and is provided with the necessary information, training and support on safeguarding matters;
- prevent the employment of individuals in work with children and / or adults at risk where they have been barred by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) or are deemed to pose an unacceptable risk to vulnerable groups;
- where appropriate request updates from appropriate individuals in relation to confirming any changes to the above;
- ensure that appropriate action is taken in the event of any allegations or suspicions regarding harm to children or adults at risk in line with this policy;
- complete a risk assessment against this policy.

2.3 This policy seeks to manage effectively the risks associated with activities and events involving children and adults at risk through:

- completing a risk assessment process;
- implementing the required actions identified by the risk assessment process;
- ensuring that the appropriate DBS or basic disclosure checks are conducted, depending on requirements and eligibility.

2.4 This policy requires that any suspicions or allegations involving harm to children and adults at risk are reported immediately in writing to the Head of Compliance and Regulation who will discuss immediately with the Director of Awarding Services to determine what action, if any, must be taken.

2.4.1 The Director of Awarding Services will liaise with the Chief Executive and Board Trustee Representative, where appropriate throughout any potential / actual safeguarding incident. This will enable each situation to be investigated thoroughly, whilst treating the parties involved fairly and with sensitivity. It will also ensure that appropriate steps are taken as a result of any investigations, which may include contacting the police and/or satisfying the legal duty to refer information to the DBS and/or Charities Commission as required.

2.4.2 All suspicions, allegations and investigations are kept confidential with incidents and actions logged on secure systems. Statistical and thematic information regarding safeguarding is reported internally on a monthly basis and quarterly to the Board to support compliance and good practice improvements.

3 Definitions

3.1 A child is anyone under the age of 18.

3.2 An adult at risk (previously vulnerable adult) is defined as any person aged 18 years or over who is, or may be, at risk of abuse or neglect because of their need for support or personal circumstance. This could be due to, and not limited to, any of the following:

- has a learning or physical disability;
- has a physical or mental illness including addiction to alcohol or drugs;
- receiving any form of health care;
- is living in sheltered accommodation or residential accommodation e.g. care home;
- is receiving domiciliary care in their own home;
- is unable to protect himself/herself against significant harm or exploitation;
- is detained in custody or under the supervision of the probation services.

4 Conduct

4.1 All representatives are expected to uphold the highest levels of professional conduct in their dealings with children or adults at risk. This includes not only avoiding any physical, verbal or other conduct that could be construed as abusive, but also by not placing themselves in situations where they are open to false allegations and by protecting vulnerable individuals from possible abuse by others.

Representatives should never:

- stray from the task in their specification;
- be unnecessarily inquisitive – do not ask for personal details that are not necessary for completion of the assessment;
- do or say anything that might make a learner feel uncomfortable;
- be drawn into personal conversations or exchange personal contact details;
- befriend learners on personal social media sites;
- make suggestive or inappropriate² remarks, even in fun, as this could be misinterpreted;
- sit or stand too close to the learner;

² Inappropriate behaviour can also occur over the telephone, email, social media or internet i.e. sexting, cyberbullying.

- meet a learner other than in the agreed assessment venue;
- allow learners to use language that aims to radicalise by supporting terrorism and forms of extremism;
- take a child or vulnerable adult alone in a car on journeys, however short.

4.2 If at any point representatives feel unsafe in a learner's company they should inform the centre manager and/or the designated centre³ safeguarding officer immediately and leave the premises and notify the Head of Compliance and Regulation immediately as described in section 2.4.

5 Appropriate Material/Portfolios

5.1 Care should be taken when selecting media to ensure the content is appropriate. Consideration should be given to the choice of materials selected by the learner for use in portfolios and its acceptability or appropriateness.

Particular care must be given to texts, images or other media that could be inferred to be:

- offensive;
- sexually explicit;
- leading to discussions about sexual relationships;
- containing nudity or representations of sexual acts;
- promoting illegality or criminal behaviour;
- violent;
- describing or promoting abuse;
- describing or promoting the support of terrorism and inciting radicalisation;
- describing or promoting inequality or inhumanity.

5.2 Where it is necessary to take photographs or video images, written consent must be obtained (from parents / guardians) before these images are taken.

5.2.1 Parents and learners / candidates should be informed that recorded evidence may be used for training as well as assessment purposes.

5.2.2 Recordings must never be placed on the internet included in e-mails which might be forwarded to unauthorised persons, or otherwise be made publically available.

6 Procedures for Concerns or Disclosures

6.1 All allegations or suspicions of abuse are taken seriously and treated in accordance with the following safeguarding procedures.

³ A 'centre' in the context of this document applies to organisations, whether a training organisation, educational institution or employer that deliver ABC Awards qualifications and / or assessments to individuals and as such has a duty of care with respect to the individual as a learner.

- 6.2 Any member of staff, sub-contractor or other stakeholder who identifies any potential safeguarding issues must report these to complianceandregulation@skillsedugroup.co.uk where they will be dealt with under the appropriate whistleblowing, malpractice or complaints procedures.
- 6.3 In consultation with the Director of Awarding Services, the Head of Compliance and Regulation will determine the stakeholders who should be informed. This could, but is not limited to, one or more of the following authorities / organisations:
- The Police
 - The ESFA
 - Ofsted
 - The LADO
 - The Regulator(s)
 - The Employer
 - The Training Provider
 - The Charities Commission

6.3.1 With respect to the Charities Commission the following are defined as serious incidents;

- beneficiaries have been, or are alleged to have been, abused or mistreated while under the care of the charity, or by someone connected with the charity, for example a trustee, staff member or volunteer
- there has been an incident where someone has been abused or mistreated (alleged or actual) and this is connected with the activities of the charity
- there has been a breach of procedures or policies at the charity which has put beneficiaries at risk, including a failure to carry out checks which would have identified that a person is disqualified under safeguarding legislation, from working with children or adults

In such cases

- The Director of Awarding Services in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer and Board Trustee Representative, where appropriate, will recommend to the Chief Executive if a serious incident report to the Charities Commission is recommended to be made by the Board of Trustees.
- The Chief Executive will liaise with the Chair of the Board and subsequently inform the Director of Awarding Services and Chief Operating Officer of the Boards decisions and any subsequent actions.
- Any serious incidents reported to the Charities Commission and the progression of such incidents is reported to the Board of Trustees by the Chief Operating Officer.

7 Quality Assurance

- 7.1 This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and in line with all our stakeholder requirements.