



Absolute Works

Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

Safeguarding reflects the systems, processes and policies that Absolute Works has in place to identify learners, apprentices, colleagues, partners and visitors who may at be at risk, assessing their needs and working with them and other agencies to protect them from avoidable harm. The responsibility for the commitment to, promotion of, implementation and outcomes of this policy rests with the senior management team including the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Chief Executive.

Awareness of this policy will be raised with all Absolute Works staff during induction and appropriate training points thereafter. The Safeguarding process will form part of the IAG and Induction process for Learners and apprentices and it will be embedded in the review process. Managers will be briefed and provided with a briefing document. Safeguarding contacts poster will be provided at all locations. All of the foregoing will form a part of the ongoing audit process to ensure it is embedded and all parties are aware of the importance of safeguarding.

Scope

This policy applies to all Absolute Works learners, apprentices, staff, visitors and partners who may have direct contact with learners as well as learners themselves. It applies to all who are under 18 as well as 19-25-year olds and vulnerable adults. This policy applies to those noted above regardless of age. It is recognised that everyone may require additional support in order for inappropriate behaviours to be identified and to protect them from harm while they are engaged with Absolute Works or one of its partners.

Safeguarding Process

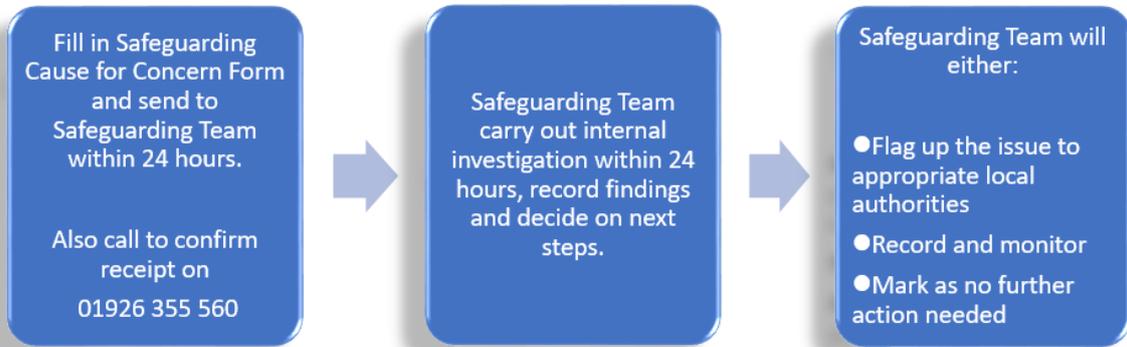
If a safeguarding issue is suspected in regards to any of the above named groups, then it is the responsibility of the person who becomes aware of it to contact the Safeguarding Team directly immediately and within 24 hours. This information is to be treated as strictly confidential and no other members of staff are to be involved in this process. The reporter must not interrogate the person raising the issue as investigations will be carried out independently by the Safeguarding Team. The person implicated in the issue (including staff members, third party contractors and members of the public) must not be alerted prior to police and safeguarding investigations as this may lead to evidence being destroyed or witnesses being intimidated.

The incident reporter must complete a Cause for Concern form (Appendix A) and submit this to the Safeguarding Team who will investigate the incident and record further details on the Cause for Concern Log in order to collate information and check for trends. This log is only accessible to the Safeguarding Team and will be shared with the Police and external local safeguarding authorities as necessary.

Note: If an individual is in immediate danger then all staff are empowered to contact the police.

Quick Start Guide

For dealing with safeguarding causes for concern the following process must be followed.



Cause for Concern spreadsheet

The Cause for Concern log is kept strictly confidential and only accessible to Safeguarding Team. This is used to monitor issues and check for trends. The information will be made available to Police and local safeguarding authorities as appropriate.

Note: All issues raised must be actioned by the Safeguarding Team within not more than 24 hours of receiving notification of a cause for concern

Safeguarding Team Contact Details

Role	Name	Contact details
Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)	Michael Wylde	mike@absoluteworks.co.uk 01926 355 560
Deputy Safeguarding Officer	Sarah Moss	sarah@absoluteworks.co.uk 01926 355 560

Responsibilities

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and there are certain precautions staff and third-party contractors need to take to ensure the safety of all learners under 18 and adults at risk.

- Learners/Apprentices under 18 years of age must not at any time be alone with members of staff, third party contractors or members of the public who are over 18 years old both for their protection and the protection of the adult from allegations of abuse. This includes vehicles, stock rooms and on works social occasions.
- Where meetings are held, including performance reviews, assessor reviews and any disciplinary or grievance hearings with learners under the age of 18 they must either be accompanied by a third member of staff, or, these meetings must be held in an environment that is open and free from concealment, within sight and easy hearing of other staff members.

Types of abuse

Safety on and off site

The safety of learners/apprentices inside partner premises, moving around, arriving and leaving the sites are important considerations. Trips to other locations must be approved before they are undertaken, and suitable arrangements agreed.

Physical Abuse

This may involve a one-off incident or victim(s) being subject to physical harm over time. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Hitting
- Biting
- Pinching
- Pushing
- Cutting or burning
- Shaking
- Inappropriate restraint
- Misuse of medication
- Forced feeding or forced use of cigarettes, alcohol or other illegal substances

Peer on Peer

Learners/Apprentices/Staff may be vulnerable to abuse by their peers; this can include sexting, sexual abuse and initiation behaviour. Such abuse is taken as seriously as abuse by adults and is subject to the same safeguarding procedures. Members of staff will not dismiss abusive behaviour as normal between young people and will not develop high thresholds before taking action. Staff members are aware of the potential uses of information technology by bullying and abusive behaviour between children. All staff members strive to create an environment that actively discourages abuse and challenges the attitudes which underlie it. In addition to safeguarding the victim, it is likely the perpetrator will have considerable needs as well as posing significant risk of harm to other children. Staff members have a duty to report this.

Internet

All partner organisations should have procedures in place to safeguard all learners/apprentices from unlawful, sexual or otherwise potentially harmful content on the internet. The dangers and benefits of the Internet will be addressed in induction and as a part of the ongoing review process.

How partner organisations monitor and respond to internet access

Partner organisations should have an internet filtering policy where internet activity for learners is monitored and any concerns are investigated. Where there is a clear safeguarding concern then this

is dealt with under the Safeguarding Policy. Where the content is deemed not to be a safeguarding/child protection concern then this is dealt with, as appropriate. Where there are safeguarding concerns with internet access whether this is through the partner internet system or the learner's own device, appropriate action is taken to minimise any future issues:

- Restriction of internet access, where appropriate
- Informing teaching staff to more closely monitor the student's internet access
- Restricting a learner's access to their own devices
- Appropriate education/training for both learner, colleagues and parents/carers

Regardless of whether any action is taken, a record will be kept of the incident. Internet access will be restricted for some learners where appropriate. In this case they will be placed on the Internet Watch List and all staff will be made aware of this.

How partners ensure internet policies and filtering are up to date

The most extreme and illegal websites are automatically blocked through the internet filtering provider and make use of the Internet Watch Foundation list.

The internet filtering categories are monitored and reviewed regularly by partners.

Sexting

Sexting is when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others, or sends sexually explicit messages. They can be sent using mobiles, tablets, smartphones and laptops – any device that allows you to share media and messages. Sexting may also be called:

- Trading nudes
- Dirties
- Pic for pic.

If a young person is found creating or sharing images, staff should inform the Safeguarding Lead so that appropriate action can be taken. Young people may think 'sexting' is harmless, but it can leave them vulnerable to:

- Blackmail – An offender may threaten to share the pictures with the child's family and friends unless the child sends money or more images;
- Bullying – If images are shared with their peers or in school, the child may be bullied;
- Unwanted attention – Images posted online can attract the attention of sex offenders, who know how to search for, collect and modify images;
- Emotional distress – Children can feel embarrassed and humiliated. If they are very distressed this could lead to suicide or self-harm.

Staff should be fully trained to recognise signs of sexting and are aware of procedures for notifying such incidents.

Catfishing

A catfish is someone who creates a false online identity. Catfishing is common on social networking and online dating sites. Sometimes a catfish's sole purpose is to engage in a fantasy. Sometimes, however, the catfish's intent is to defraud a victim, seek revenge or commit identity theft. Currently catfishing is not currently illegal, but elements of the activity could be covered by different parts of the law. If a victim hands over money, the 'catfish' could be prosecuted for fraud. Someone using a fake profile to post offensive messages or doctored images designed to humiliate could also face criminal action.

Staff are aware of catfishing and encourage learners to discuss concerns with an adult. Advice can be provided to parents if staff are concerned that their son/daughter is vulnerable.

Hate/Mate Crime

Hate crime is defined as: Any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a personal characteristic. Hate crime may be one-off incidents or systematic abuse that continues over periods of weeks, months or even years and may occur between strangers who have never met, between acquaintances or within the family.

The term 'Mate crime' is being used by some disability organisations to raise awareness. People with learning disabilities are often befriended by people who then exploit them. These are groups

and individuals who pretend to be friends but who are really taking advantage of people. Staff are aware of this risks and signs of hate/mate crime and, as with many other topics, this will be covered in training.

Psychological/Emotional Abuse

This is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of someone. This may include but is not limited to:

- Coercion
- Enforced isolation
- Bullying
- Verbal abuse
- Humiliation
- Gas lighting, where an abuser carries out abusive activities and then tries to convince the victim that such events did not happen

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing an individual to take part in sexual activities, whether or not they are aware of what is happening. Such activities include, but are not limited to:

- Unauthorised, non-consensual physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts
- Forcing individuals to look at or being involved in the production of pornographic material
- Encouraging under 18's or adults at risk to behave in sexually inappropriate ways

This applies to heterosexual and LGBTQIA+ abuse: Learners should be supported in the practice of confronting heterosexism, sexism, genderism, allosexism, and monosexism in oneself and others out of self-interest and a concern for the well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual people. This is founded on the belief and beliefs that dismantling heterosexism, monosexism, trans oppression/trans misogyny/cissexism and allosexism is a social justice issue.

Transgender, gender variant and intersex

Partners should be encouraged to foster an environment that is inclusive, safe and free from harassment and discrimination for all members of the community, students and adults, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and/or sex characteristics.

Absolute Works promotes the learning of human diversity that is inclusive of trans, gender variant and intersex students, thus promoting social awareness, acceptance and respect. Absolute Works also promotes a climate that is physically, emotionally and intellectually safe for all learners and apprentices to further their successful learning environment and well-being, including that of trans, gender variant and intersex persons.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Under the Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) guidance and in line with safeguarding training, all staff are trained in spotting signs of any learner who may be/is being sexually exploited. Staff are required to be vigilant in recognising signs of any learner being/or potentially being sexually exploited. Indicators of sexual exploitation may include:

- Going missing for periods of time or regularly returning home late
- Skipping work, lessons or being disruptive in class
- Engaging in criminal activity and appearing with unexplained gifts or possessions that cannot be accounted for
- Experiencing health problems that may indicate a sexually transmitted infection
- Having mood swings and changes in temperament
- Using drugs and/or alcohol
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour, such as over-familiarity with strangers, dressing in a sexualised manner or sending sexualised images
- Signs of unexplained physical harm, such as bruising or cigarette burns.

This link [Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges](#) (updated May 2018), Reinforces the emphasis on sexual violence and sexual harassment after Ofsted found this to be a common failing for schools. All staff will be able to identify this and know what to do

Female Genital Mutilation

Under the Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2016 guidance and in line with local safeguarding training, all staff should be trained in spotting signs of any learner who is at risk of female genital mutilation. Staff are required to be vigilant in recognising signs that a learner may have been subject to female genital mutilation. Indicators may include:

- Having difficulty walking, sitting or standing
- Spend longer than normal in the bathroom or toilet
- Having unusual behaviour after an absence from work or learning
- Being particularly reluctant to undergo normal medical examinations
- Asking for help but may not be explicit about the problem due to embarrassment or fear.

Some indicators of a learner at immediate risk of female genital mutilation include conversations about:

- Being taken 'home' to visit family
- A special occasion to 'become a woman'
- An older female relative visiting from 'home'
- Asking an adult for help
- Running away from home or missing from work

All staff should report instances where they:

- Are informed by a girl under 18 years that an act of FGM has been carried out on her; or
- Observe physical signs which appear to show that an act of FGM has been carried out on a girl under 18 and they have no reason to believe that the act was necessary for the girl's physical or mental health or for purposes connected with labour or birth.

Honour Based Violence

'Honour'-based violence is a form of domestic abuse perpetrated in the name of so-called 'honour'. The honour code which it refers to is set at the discretion of usually, but not always, male relatives; women who do not abide by the 'rules' are then punished for bringing shame on the family. Honour-based violence is a violent crime. It might be considered against people who:

- Become involved with a boyfriend/girlfriend from a different culture/religion
- Experience same sex attraction or a same sex relationship

- Want to get out of an arranged marriage or forced marriage
- Wear clothes or take part in activities that might not be considered traditional within a particular culture.

Forced Marriage

Forcing a person into a marriage is morally repugnant and is a crime in many parts of the world. 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. Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture as a way to coerce a person into marriage.

Spirit Possession

Staff are made aware of potential indicators in identifying abuse or neglect linked to a belief in spirit possession.

Witchcraft

This is not about challenging people's beliefs, but where beliefs lead to abuse that must not be tolerated. Staff need to be aware of certain kinds of child abuse that are linked to faith or belief. This includes belief in witchcraft, spirit possession, demons or the devil, the evil eye or djinns, dakini, kindoki, ritual or muti murders and use of fear of the supernatural to make children comply with being trafficked for domestic slavery or sexual exploitation. This is not confined to one faith, nationality or ethnic community.

Neglect

Neglect is where there is a failure to meet an individual's basic physical, medical or psychological needs and may result in serious impairment of the person's health and wellbeing. This includes failure to provide access to appropriate health care or adequate nutrition and hydration.

Financial or Material Abuse

Financial or material abuse is where money or property is misappropriated with or without the victim's knowledge. It can include:

- Theft
- Fraud
- Misuse or damage of property
- Coercion relating to a will or other forms of inheritance
- Encouraging young people or those with limited means to involve themselves in destructive financial transactions such as irresponsible gambling or investments

Discriminatory Abuse

Discriminatory abuse is where abuse is directed at an individual, or group, based on a protected characteristic they have, or are perceived to have. This includes disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy and parenthood, race (including ethnic or national origin, colour and nationality), religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation.

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking includes the acts of recruiting, transporting, transferring, harbouring, receiving or exchanging control over a person through the use of force, coercion, abuse of vulnerability, fraud, deception, or other means for the purpose of exploiting them. Often for use in prostitution, domestic servitude, bonded or forced labour.

Gas lighting

Gaslighting is a form of psychological manipulation that seeks to sow seeds of doubt in a targeted individual or in members of a targeted group, making them question their own memory, perception, and sanity. Using persistent denial, misdirection, contradiction, and lying, it attempts to destabilise the victim and delegitimize the victim's belief. Instances may range from the denial by an abuser that previous abusive incidents ever occurred up to the staging of bizarre events by the abuser with the intention of disorienting the victim.

Sadfishing

Sadfishing is the act of someone making exaggerated claims about their emotional problems to generate sympathy. Sadfishing is a common reaction for someone going through a hard time or pretending to be going through a hard time. Sadfishing is said to hurt younger people, making them much easier to bully. This is due to people sharing their personal and emotional stories online, often getting targeted. The concept of sadfishing rose to prominence when it was alleged that certain celebrities were sadfishing. Young people who seek support online started being accused of sadfishing. It has been identified that the accusations of so-called sadfishing could further harm young people with mental health problems. Sadfishing is related to cyberbullying and is often seen as a way of someone attention seeking. Sadfishing seems to get the best attention of people, making it really popular on social medias and the internet. Sadfishing is said to attract a lot of bullies and paedophiles.

Radicalisation and PREVENT Duties

Absolute Works recognises that learners may be at risk of radicalisation by extremist groups and that we have a duty to protect learners and uphold the British values of individual liberty, mutual respect, tolerance, the rule of law and democracy. Where learners are identified as having been affected by radicalisation the Safeguarding Team will refer learners to the Channel process

Staff Training

All Absolute Work Assessors, Tutors, and Managers of Apprentices and Learners are required to undergo Safeguarding training as part of their Induction process. This training will include what signs of abuse and radicalisation are and the process to follow in order to report concerns in a timely manner.

Homelessness

Absolute Works recognises that learners may be at risk of homelessness and we have a duty of care to protect those learners. Unfortunately coupled with poverty, homelessness in the UK is on the increase. Research commissioned by the National Housing Federation in 2019 identifies that in England 3.6 million people are living in overcrowded houses, 2.5 million cannot afford where they live and 2.5 million are living with relatives and parents because they have no other choice. This puts significant stress on families and can lead to breakdown of the home.

Using the definition of homelessness below, some of these people are already considered homeless, and the rest are at risk of homelessness. The Children's Commissioner's research (2019) suggests that of the 600,000 children and young people referred to above, 210,000 are either living in temporary accommodation or 'sofa surfing' (i.e. staying with friends or family without any formal arrangement being in place and often sleeping in spaces not designed as bedrooms). These figures are however an estimate as there are many people, e.g. those classed by local authority housing providers as intentionally homeless, or those with no recourse to public funds, that do not show up in any statistics.

Definition of homelessness

The definition of homelessness means not having a home. You are homeless if you have nowhere to stay and are living on the streets, but you can be homeless even if you have a roof over your head.

You count as being homeless if Staying with friends or family

- staying in a hostel, night shelter or B&B;
- squatting (because you have no legal right to stay);
- at risk of violence or abuse in your home;
- living in poor conditions that affect your health;
- living apart from your family because you don't have a place to live together

COVID 19

Refer to the Company Health and safety policy

Appendix A – Safeguarding Cause for Concern Form



Safeguarding
Cause for Concern F