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# EMPLOYERS GUIDE

## Safeguarding Learners

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## Safeguarding Learners

Free2Learn is committed to safeguarding and protecting all our learners. Safe learners make successful learners and we expect all employers to share our commitment.

Therefore Free2Learn has developed this guide to safeguarding, including a 'what you should do' guide if you are concerned about a young person (under the age of 18) or vulnerable adult.

### Legal Guidance

Free2Learn is required through Government legislation (*The Children's Act 2004*) to ensure that everyone working with young people (up the age of 18) and vulnerable adults\* understands their responsibility to keep them safe. This guide provides information on how we can work together to fulfil that responsibility. Free2Learn are expected to ensure that you:

- Provide young people or vulnerable adults with a safe working environment;
- Recognise and report any young people or vulnerable adults who are suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, and take appropriate action with the aim of making sure they are kept safe both at home, at College and in their work placement.

### Important Principles

- Young People and vulnerable adults have a right to be safe and should be protected from all forms of abuse.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.
- It is better to offer help as early as possible, before issues escalate and become more damaging.
- Working together with other agencies and colleagues provides the best support.

All employers need to be aware of appropriate guidelines and behaviour in the workplace. and learners come under the same safeguarding procedures as any young person under the age of 18 (or 19 whilst in education). \*Where a person is classed as vulnerable due to additional learning, social, mental health or disability need, the age of the person is no longer relevant.

Employers also have a duty of care to all their employees, regardless of age.

### As an Employer, you should:

Identify a named member of staff to be the key point of contact for the young person/vulnerable adult.

Making sure, that:

- All learners feel that the working environment is safe and welcoming, and that all individuals are respected equally;

**Remember!** If you have concerns or want more information, advice or guidance contact Free2Learn's dedicated Safeguarding Team. email: [safeguarding@free2learn.org](mailto:safeguarding@free2learn.org)

- Vulnerable learners are involved in individual risk assessments and understand the arrangements to help them stay safe;
- Learners are aware of their own duties and responsibilities in creating a safe environment for everyone;
- Learners implement safe working practices
- Learners understand and use internet safety measures;
- Learners understand abuse, discrimination, bullying and harassment and know what actions to take if they occur;

Know who to contact at Free2Learn if you have any concerns about a young person or vulnerable adult's welfare.

Free2Learn has to adhere to the Prevent duty which means keeping learners safe from getting involved in illegal violent extremist or terrorist activities. One of your responsibilities is to report any suspicions or information that you or others are being encouraged to get involved in extremist/terrorist behaviour.

## What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the term used for protecting people from maltreatment and keeping individuals safe and protected from harm, abuse and neglect.

This can include the following types of abuse/harm:

- Physical Abuse – deliberate physical injury/harm
- Emotional Abuse – abuse that has a negative impact on emotional health and wellbeing
- Mental Health Issues
- Sexual Abuse or Exploitation
- Neglect and Self-Neglect
- Domestic Abuse (unhealthy relationships)
- Forced Marriage
- Financial Abuse
- Bullying (including cyber-bullying)
- Radicalisation and Extremism
- Discriminatory Abuse.

## Warning signs and indicators:

- Changes in behaviour and character – becoming withdrawn, aggressive, challenging or disruptive
- People who go missing
- Excessive use of alcohol or substances, including “Legal Highs”
- Physical injuries e.g. bruises, cuts or burns
- People who are reluctant to go home or appear frightened
- People who are in a controlling or unhealthy relationship – this includes with peers, family and partners
- Unexplained gifts and new possessions
- Young people who have older partners
- Changes in emotional health and wellbeing
- Poor or neglected living conditions or homelessness

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- Lack of adequate clothing, money or food
- Self-harm
- Stress, anxiety and low in mood.

Safeguarding concerns can also be a worry or feeling that something is wrong. The welfare of young people and vulnerable adults is paramount and action must be taken to respond to known or suspected abuse.

## **Our Approach**

In order to support our learners, Free2Learn has a dedicated full time safeguarding team and trained professionals who can offer you advice and guidance.

## **What You Should Do:**

If you are concerned about the safety or welfare of a learner you can discuss the issues with the named contact that is supporting learners in the workplace. Alternatively you can contact Free2Learn's Safeguarding Team on the number below.

Being alert to signs and indicators of abuse and neglect is the first step to promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults. Don't be worried about asking for help or raising concerns. If you have concerns you should ask for help.

Employees working closely with young or vulnerable learners should be alert to the possibilities of harm. It is your duty and your staff duty to **inform only, not to investigate** – this is the role of the Police or Social Services.

If an employer or any staff member, in the course of their work has a learner safeguarding issue brought to their attention, it must be treated as a priority and the Safeguarding Team at Free2Learn must be contacted as soon as possible.

Our Safeguarding Team will then take the advice from the appropriate organisation for the best course of action. Remember the main priority is to protect learners from harm.

All serious cases of harm should be reported to either local Police or Social Services who will log the report and make further investigations; our Safeguarding Team will report this on the learner's behalf if the employer and learner have not done so themselves. If in doubt contact our Safeguarding Team for advice.

Further advice and guidance is available on Free2Learn website – this includes a detailed safeguarding policy and details of Free2Learn's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## **How to deal with a young person who discloses information:**

- Listen Non-judgmentally.
- Stay calm.
- Ask open ended questions that deal with the who, what, where, when and how.
- Remember questions should clarify but do not investigate.
- Avoid giving any opinion of offering advice.

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- Do not promise confidentiality – explain you may need to talk to someone immediately.
- Reassure the young person, but avoid unnecessary contact.
- Inform the Safeguarding Team at Free2Learn as soon as possible.
- Maintain confidentiality, do not discuss with others.
- Record what the young person said using their own words. Sign and date the record.

## Specific Safeguarding Issues – Further Information

The information below aims to provide more detailed guidance about key safeguarding issues that are high profile and require immediate interventions.

### Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism:

Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and forms of extremism.

There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. As with managing other safeguarding risks, it is important to be alert to changes in behaviour which could indicate that they may be in need of help or protection.

Specific background factors may contribute to vulnerability which are often combined with specific influences such as family, friends or online, and with specific needs for which an extremist or terrorist group may appear to provide an answer. The internet and the use of social media in particular has become a major factor in the radicalisation of young people.

### Prevent

Prevent is one of four elements of CONTEST, the government's counter-terrorism strategy. It aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, and promotes safeguarding of young and/or vulnerable people. In 2011, the government strategy of PREVENT was implemented.

The Prevent strategy seeks to:

- Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and aspects of extremism, and the threat we face from those who promote these views
- Provide practical help to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support
- Work with a wide range of sectors where there are risks of radicalisation which needs to be addressed, including education, criminal justice, faith, charities, the internet and health

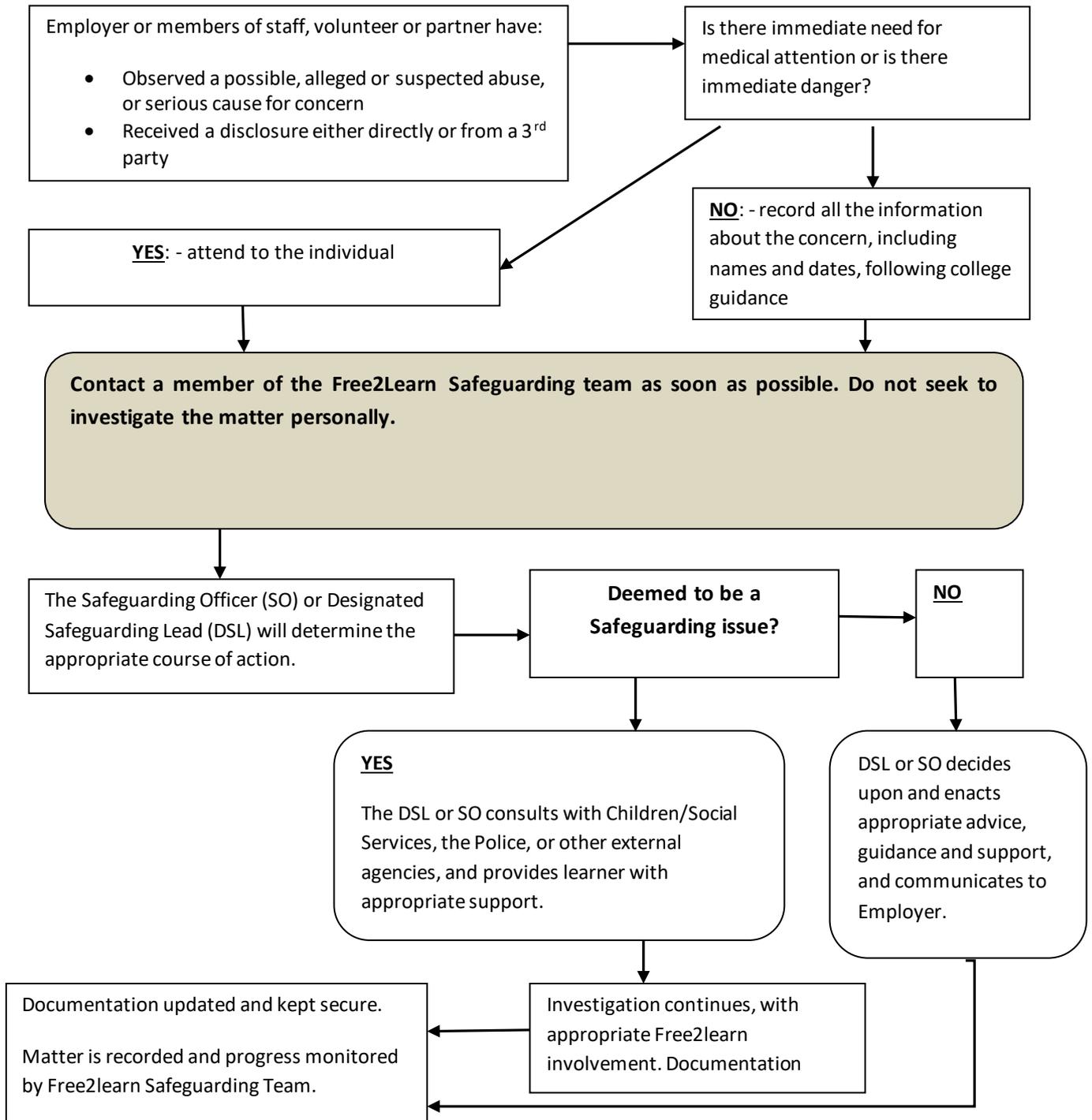
### Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE):

CSE involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people receive something (for example food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, gifts, money or in some cases simply affection) as a result of engaging in sexual activities. Sexual exploitation can take many forms ranging from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for affection or gifts, to serious organised crime by gangs and groups. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power in the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim which increases as the exploitative

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relationship develops. Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex, sexual bullying including cyberbullying and grooming. However, it is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.

### What You Should Do Flowchart



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## Safeguarding Do and Don'ts

- Do contact the Free2Learn Safeguarding Team if you have concerns or want more information, advice or guidance. email: [safeguarding@free2learn.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@free2learn.org.uk)
- Do ensure that the person is not in immediate danger; if they are seek Police or medical assistance (999).
- Do find a quiet, confidential, secure area for you and the young person.
- Don't place yourself or anyone else in danger.
- Never promise confidentiality – you will have to break it and with it the person's trust in you.
- Do remember, that the child, young person or adult may not want their family informed. In this instance seek advice from a member of the Safeguarding team/Social Services/Police.
- Do not interfere with, or contaminate potential evidence following a physical or sexual assault, for example, by get the learner to wash, change clothing etc.
- Do listen and stay calm, you need to listen without making assumptions or judgements.
- Do not interview the child, young person or adult at risk of harm. Question normally and without pressure and only to be sure that you understand what you have heard. Never ask leading questions or act as an investigator. Do not put words in their mouth.
- Do reassure that by telling you, they have done the right thing.
- Do inform them that you must pass the information on, but that only those that need to know about it will be told. Inform them of whom you will report the matter to.
- Do not investigate concerns or allegations yourself, but report them immediately to a member of the safeguarding team.
- Don't, in any circumstances, discuss the issue with the alleged perpetrator(s).
- Don't do nothing - tell Safeguarding or the relevant authorities immediately.

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