

Adult Learning and Skills 2024-2025

Safeguarding Policy (Children and Adults) with Reporting and Referral Procedures

Review date:

November 2024

Next review date:

November 2025



**Wigan
Council**



Funded by

GMCA GREATER
MANCHESTER
COMBINED
AUTHORITY



**Education & Skills
Funding Agency**

Contents:		Page:
1	Policy Statement	2
2	Useful Contacts	5
3	Process flowchart for: Non- emergency but cause for serious concern	6
4	Process flowchart for: Witnessing an incident	7
5	Receiving a Complaint (a disclosure)	8
6	Witnessing an incident	6
7	Policy on handling a disclosure and making a referral	10
	Appendix 1: Incident Report Form	11
	Appendix 2: Definitions	13
	Appendix 3: Confidentiality	16
	Appendix 4: Risk Management	17
	Appendix 5: Whistle Blowing Policy	18
	Appendix 6: Avoiding Allegations	19
	Appendix 7: Safeguarding Process	20

Policy Statement

The Adult Learning and Skills Team in Wigan Council acknowledges its responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults (a child is defined as anyone under the age of 18) and is committed to providing a caring and safe environment for all its learners and those accessing its services.

Adult Learning and Skills will comply with safeguarding legislation and policy and will take additional reasonable steps to safeguard and minimise the risk of harm to children, young people and adults. Any allegation or information concerning abuse or neglect will be taken seriously and a referral to the appropriate agency will be made, as deemed necessary, within the legislation.

Aim of the Policy

- provide ongoing guidance for all staff and delivery partners
- improve joint working with partner agencies and delivery partners
- for the team's own learners have a point of referral to co-ordinate the response in situations of concern
- for delivery partners a point to inform that a safeguarding referral has been made
- train staff to a higher knowledge and awareness of safeguarding issues
- improve recruitment and other HR practices

It is the expectation of the Adult Learning and Skills Team that delivery partners have in place their own safeguarding policies and procedures. *

Statement of Principles

The Adult Learning and Skills Team within Wigan Council directly delivers and sub-contracts Community Learning and Skills to sub-contractors/partner providers in order to deliver its services.

The service will:

- establish a Safeguarding Policy in relation to its work with providers and review on an annual basis.
- work with providers to establish a safe learning environment by ensuring that safeguarding policy and processes are in place and robust.
- work with providers to ensure a safe environment in which all learners can learn and develop.
- establish a safe e-learning environment through risk assessment in which all learners can learn and develop.
- provide learners with information so as to make them aware of how to keep themselves safe.
- identify Designated Safeguarding Officers responsible for safeguarding matters.

For the Adult Learning and Skills' own learners (expected for providers):

- maintain clear procedures to identify and refer suspected cases of abuse.
- respond to any safeguarding issues that are reported or identified.
- adopt appropriate recruitment procedures, including arrangements for DBS checks to be completed on tutors/assessors who are working with young people under the age of 18 and provide up-to-date safeguarding training for all staff working with children and adults.

*In specific circumstances, and by arrangement, the Adult Learning and Skills Team will provide the overarching Safeguarding function including the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead- etc.
Refreshed Version November 2024

- collect information to provide appropriate safeguarding support for all learners.
- monitor the law and government intentions with regard to safeguarding.
- ensure staff have the correct support and knowledge to ensure they are able to keep themselves safe.

Partner Providers will:

- have in place an appropriate Safeguarding Policy.
- ensure that all staff involved with the delivery of courses undergoes safeguarding training and will include as a minimum awareness raising, providers policy and procedures, identification of designated person(s).
- identify a designated person responsible for acting as a Designated Safeguarding Officer as detailed in policies, procedures and guidance – this role is referred to within this document as **Designated Safeguarding Officer**.
- inform Managers, Andrea Cowton and Kathryn Taylor, of any safeguarding incidents involving learners and detail actions taken.
- promote safeguarding throughout its recruitment process and ensure all required DBS checks are completed prior to the appointment of any individual who will be involved in the delivery of courses.
- provide Adult Learning and Skills with the details of tutors' DBS details for the inclusion on the Central Register.

Process Overview

This policy and process sets out your responsibilities regarding safeguarding both Children and Adults. It should be read alongside:

- Wigan Safeguarding Adult Board's Multi Agency Procedure for Protecting Adults at Risk. The policy is based on national guidance and the Care Act 2014 [Wigan policy and procedure \(wigansafeguardingadults.org\)](https://wigansafeguardingadults.org)
- Wigan Safeguarding Children's Partnership Multi Agency Greater Manchester Procedures for Safeguarding Children –<https://greatermanchesterscb.proceduresonline.com>

Section 42 Safeguarding Care Act 2014

S42(1) Where a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that an adult in its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there) -

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.

It is designed to assist staff in recognising areas for concern and the steps to take if they have concerns about the safety or treatment of our learners/customers.

The policy focusses on what to do if you witness an incident or someone discloses neglect or abuse to you; it also provides guidance if you become aware of any safeguarding concerns regarding a professional in your or other organisations.

However, it does not cover every circumstance. If you cannot find what you are looking for in this document, or require further information, please refer to the following website/links:

Wigan Safeguarding Adults Board (WSAB) -
<https://www.wigansafeguardingadults.org/Professionals/Index.aspx>

Wigan Safeguarding Children Board
<http://www.wiganlscb.com/>

In all instances you should speak to your **Designated Safeguarding Officer** and the process flowcharts highlight the importance of this role. The Adult Learning and Skills Team has two allocated Designated Safeguarding Leads (see below) for further support if required.

Staff must remember that if they have concerns that a child/young person or adult has suffered, or is likely to suffer significant harm, they must take action.

(1) Emergency action: if you have no time to contact a Designated Safeguarding Officer because the matter is so urgent: for example, danger to life or limb or kidnapping, then ring 999 and ask for the POLICE.

(2) Non-emergency but cause for serious concern:

You must discuss this with a Designated Safeguarding Officer **within two hours, or when reasonably practicable**, of your concern being firmed-up in your mind, in order to decide what action should be taken.

Your report may result in the Designated Safeguarding Officer making a safeguarding referral to People Directorate – children, adult and families or other agencies.

Staff should **not** report concerns to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) directly.

Guidance on making a referral is included in this policy: see page 6 - 7

USEFUL CONTACTS

Designated Safeguarding Officers – Adult Learning and Skills

Andrea Cowton

07917 030064

Kathryn Taylor

07771 344073

Adult Learning and Skills

Wigan Life Centre South

College Ave

Wigan

WN1 1NJ

Adults Central Duty Team

The Central Duty Team are the first point of contact for advice regarding people who you think they need help / safeguarding.

You can telephone them on **01942 828777**. The team operates 8.45 am to 8.00 pm Monday to Friday and 8.45 am to 1.00 pm Saturdays

Out of Hours (Emergency only): 01942 828300

Local Safeguarding Adults Team

They can also offer advice regarding any safeguarding concerns you may have. They operate office hours Monday to Friday - 01942 486178

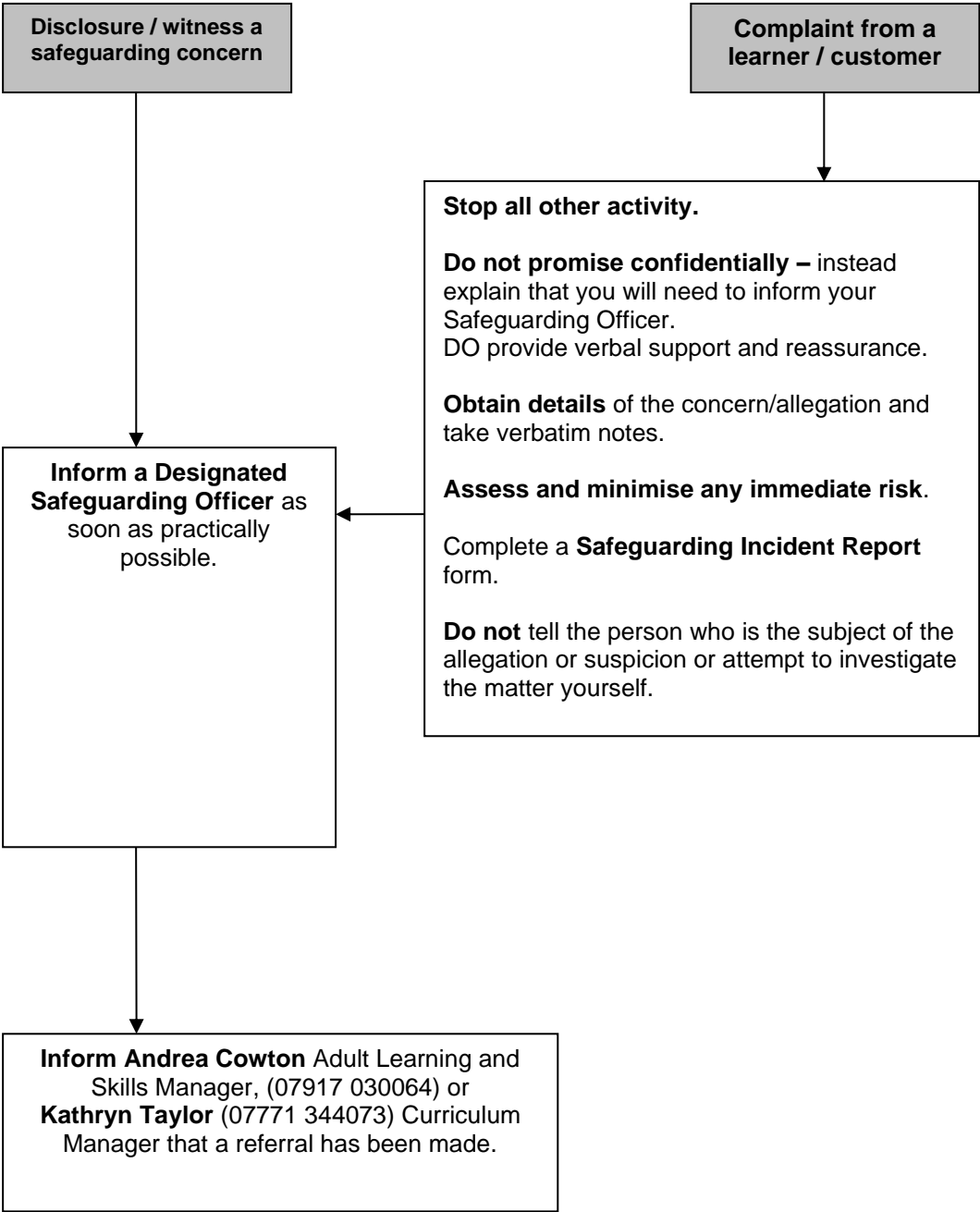
Children's Central Duty Team

Monday to Sunday (24 hours): 01942 828300

Provider Partner Designated Safeguarding Officers:

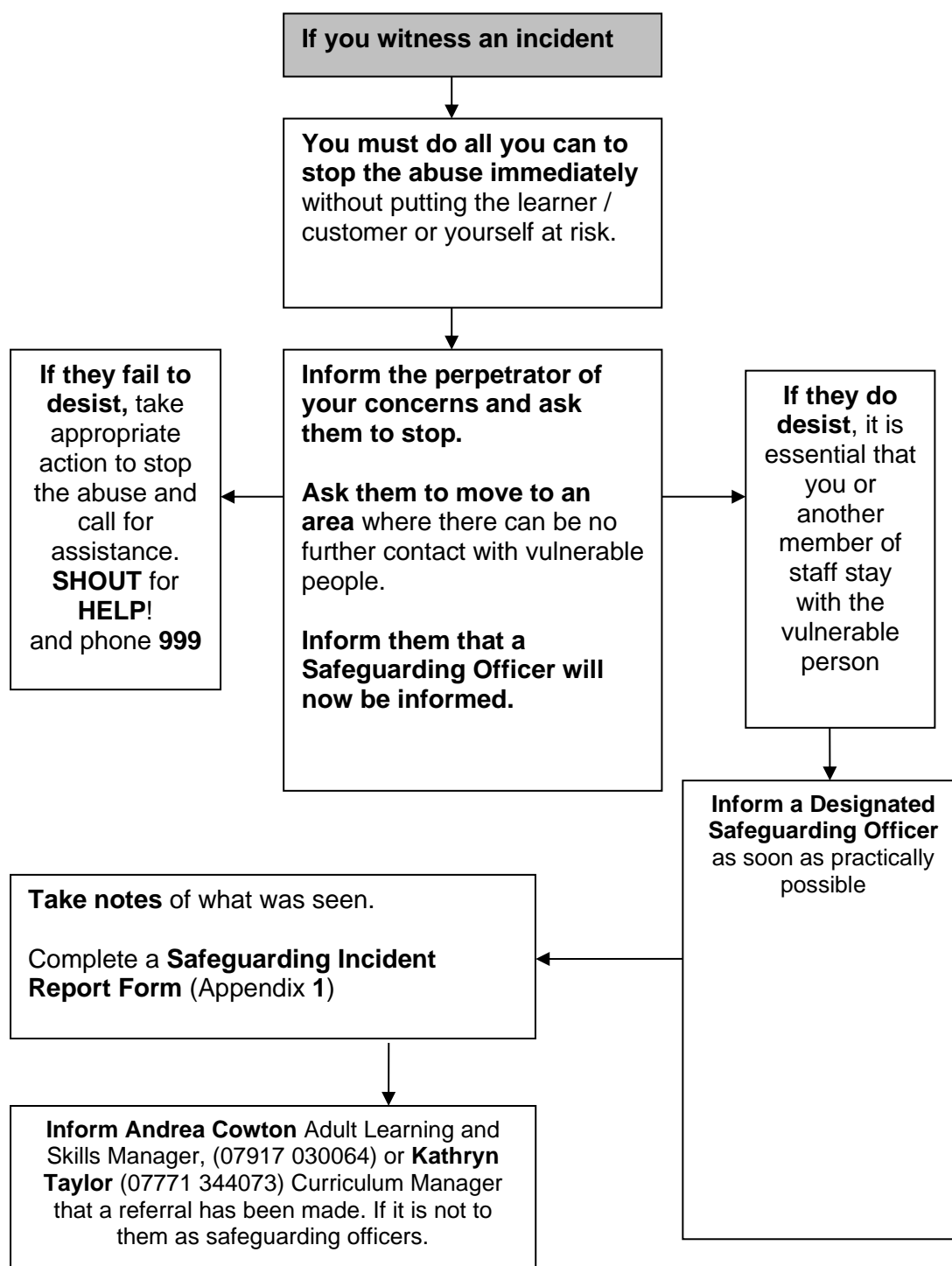
TMP College CIC	Julie Bebe (Designated)	01942 212607 juliebebe@tmpcollege.org
	Kim Pulman (Deputy)	01942 212607 kimpulman@tmpcollege.org
	Jennifer Speed (Deputy)	01942 212607 jenniferspeed@tmpcollege.org
	Katie McKnight (Deputy)	01942 212607 katiemcknight@tmpcollege.org
Transport Training Academy	Lauren Scanlin (Designated)	01942 874 686 l.scanlin@ttacademy.com
	Izett Thompson (Deputy)	01942 874 686 i.thompson@ttacademy.com
	Email: safe@ttacademy.com given out at induction	

Process Flowchart - Non emergency but cause for serious concern



For further information on receiving a complaint ('a disclosure') refer to page 8

Process Flowchart - witnessing an incident



Receiving a disclosure

From a parent / carer

YOU must inform your **Designated Safeguarding Officer**, as soon as practicably possible. They will need to decide whether any matters need to be dealt with under child protection procedures as well.

From a learner / customer

YOU must stop all other activity, stay calm and focus on what you are being told and you must:

- Not promise confidentiality; instead, you should tell them that only other people who will deal with the matter will be informed (see **Appendix 3 on Confidentiality** page 16).
- Provide verbal support and reassurance.
- Explain that the matter will be dealt with quickly and appropriately.
- Only ask what you need to know to make an assessment/judgement about the complaint.
- Remain objective and do not interrogate or ask leading questions; instead ask open questions but avoid expressing opinions.
- Obtain details of the concern/allegation taking verbatim notes.
- Obtain name, date of birth and address of the person making the complaint or allegation.
- If on-site and in direct contact with the learner/customer, consider what action should be taken to minimise risk and ensure their safety.
- Report the matter to your **Designated Safeguarding Officer**, so they can take responsibility for further action (e.g. suspension and removal of a member of staff, other learner or service user).
- If not on-site, discuss how the person may make *themselves* safe. In an emergency, the police can take a person 'to a place of safety'.

Take notes of what happened, what was said and by whom and complete an incident form – **Appendix 1 (page 11)**. The notes should include what was seen, what was said and by whom, what action was taken and details of date, time and location and the names of the child or adult. **Date and sign the notes.** Do not alter the notes later on, upon reflection, because if they are questioned in court, you could be asked if you had altered them because you could not properly remember what happened initially. Never alter your original notes. You have done your best to write down what you thought happened and that is sufficient.

Next steps

You should **NOT**:

- At this stage, tell the person who is the subject of an allegation or suspicion.
- Investigate the matter yourself.

Instead you **must**:

- Report the matter to your **Designated Safeguarding Officer immediately**. If they are unavailable, contact the People Directorate safeguarding team/s (children or adults).
- Ensure that you have all the relevant facts and information, preferably in writing, to enable the Designated Safeguarding Officer to act appropriately.

Allegation against a person in a position of trust

If allegations involve a member of staff, steps must be taken to ensure the learner does not need to have contact with him/her and a discussion with your Designated Safeguarding Lead must take place. If the professional in question is the safeguarding lead then please alert the next most senior manager and speak to the Adult Learning and Skills Safeguarding leads.

Paragraph 14.120 to 14.132 of the Care Act 2014 Statutory Guidance states that those providing universal care and support services, should have clear policies for responding to allegations against people who work in a position of trust, either in a paid or unpaid capacity with adults with care and support needs. Examples of this, are a person who has:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed an adult or child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, an adult or child.
- Behaved towards an adult or child in a way that indicates they may pose risk of harm to adults with care and support needs.

In addition to referring the safeguarding incident as per the processes above, the matter should be reported via the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) process if the professional has responsibilities regarding the care of children, or the Persons in a Position of Trust (PiPoT) if the professional has responsibilities regarding the care of adults.

If they have responsibilities for both, then both must be used. Links to both LADO and PiPoT Process and referral form are supplied below.

<https://www.wiganlscb.com/Professionals/LADO.aspx>

<https://www.wigansafeguardingadults.org/Docs/Guidance/PIPOT-Policy.pdf>

<https://www.wigansafeguardingadults.org/Docs/Guidance/PIPOT-Referral-Form.docx>

Allegations Against Other Learners

If another service user is being accused of being involved as an abuser, the Designated Safeguarding Officer must be informed and it will be referred to the relevant safeguarding team and the police if appropriate. In discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Adult Learning and Skills Team, a referral to either LADO or PiPoT process may be required.

Policy on handling a disclosure and making a referral

Staff may encounter safeguarding concerns from their work, from a member of public contacting the service, by a parental complaint or by the learner/customer themselves. Such disclosures may raise concerns which might place a child or young person or adult at risk.

The concern might relate to:

- What is or may be happening (or happened in the past) in our organization, or
- What is happening (or happened) outside the organisation (e.g. in their own family or their workplace).

In either case, the concern should be treated in the same way.

The concerns might be about the behaviour of a:

- Member of our staff
- Peer
- Carer
- Relative or family friend
- Employer or staff in their workplace

The concern could relate to actions or inaction (e.g. insufficient response by a member of our staff or a manager or staff in their workplace).

Any member of Adult Learning and Skills staff could receive such information.

Staff must remember that if they have concerns that a child or adult has suffered, or is likely to suffer significant harm, they must take immediate action.

They must discuss this with the Designated Safeguarding Officer in order to decide what action should be taken.

This may result in making a referral to the People Directorate or other agencies.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Incident Report Form

Appendix 2: Definitions

Appendix 3: Confidentiality

Appendix 4: Risk Management

Appendix 5: Whistle Blowing policy

Appendix 6: Avoiding Allegations

Appendix 7: Safeguarding Process

Appendix 1 – Incident Report Form

Adult Learning and Skills Safeguarding Incident Report Form

Learner/Customer Details	Reporting Section Details
Name:	Name:
Address:	Service:
	Venue:
Postcode:	
Date of Birth:	Tel:
Tel:	

Describe briefly what was disclosed/witnessed

Say what you see, do not include opinion

Time of incident		Time of completion	
------------------	--	--------------------	--

Names and contact details of any witnesses

Provide as much information as possible

Staff Member Completing	Investigating Manager/Designated Safeguarding Officer
Name:	Name:
Signature:	Signature:
Date:	Date:

Action Taken

Date:	Time:
Name:	Role:
Notes of the discussion and actions:	

This page is intentionally left blank

Appendix 2 - Definitions

Safeguarding describes the broader preventative approach to planning and procedures that are in place to protect children and adults from any potential harm or damage. It includes all types of harm and prevention of these types of harm, not just abuse and neglect (as *child protection* does). It is defined by the Children Act 1989 and Joint Chief Inspector's Report on Arrangements to Safeguard Children (2002) as meaning that:

"Agencies and organisations working with children and young people take all reasonable measures to ensure that the risks of harm to the individual's welfare are minimised."

Child Protection looks at recognising abuse and neglect and acting on it, whereas *safeguarding* looks at keeping children, young people and adults safe from a much wider range of potential harm including health & safety aspects, and delivers preventative action, not just reaction. Like other local authorities Wigan has established relationships with the Safeguarding Children's Board and Safeguarding Adults Board – a list of local contact telephone numbers and websites is provided on page 3.

Children any person aged under 18 years as defined in the Children Act 2004 and the DfES guidance document *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2006). The specific definitions are:

(1) UK Law: 'A Child':

"In relation to protection and safeguarding the welfare of a child, as in the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, a child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital, in prison or in a Young Offenders' Institution, does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection under the Children Act 1989."

Source: **Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)**

(2) UK Law: 'A Child or Young Person':

'means those aged between 0-19, those who are over 19 and receiving services as care leavers (childcare homes) under section 23C – 24D of the Children Act 1989 and those over 19 but under 25 years with learning difficulties and disabilities within the meaning of section 13 Learning and Skills Act 2000 and who are receiving services under that Act'.

Source: **Children Act 2004**

Children in Need

Under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, Children and Young people are defined as being "in need" when their vulnerability is such that their health or development will be significantly impaired or not reached or maintained at a satisfactory level without the provision of additional services, or they are disabled. The critical factors to be taken into account are what will happen to a child's development or health without services being provided, and the likely effect the services will have on the child's standard of health and development. Local Authorities have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children (see also page 17). It replaces the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA). The DBS is responsible for:

- processing requests for criminal records checks
- deciding whether it is appropriate for a person to be placed on or removed from a barred list
- placing or removing people from the DBS children's barred list and adults' barred list for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Designated Safeguarding Officer(s) have a role within Skills & Learning and within Provider Services:

- To receive information about programmes and services that are delivered and may involve young people and/or adults.
- To receive information from any staff (including associates, volunteers and carers) who have safeguarding concerns and record it.
- To assess the information promptly and carefully, clarifying and obtaining more information about the matter as appropriate.
- To consult initially with a statutory safeguarding agency to test out any doubts or uncertainty.
- To make a formal referral to the relevant statutory child or adult safeguarding agency or the police, as appropriate
- Attend and represent the service at any statutory safeguarding meetings (strategy meetings, case conferences etc.) once a referral has been made, and as appropriate.
- Promote and support safer recruitment practice
- Minimise the risk of misplaced or malicious allegations made against adults who work with children and young people
- Reduce the incidence of positions of trust being abused or misused
- Ensure that work placement providers, service level agreement holders, tutors, partners and sub-contracted training providers are risk assessed and have their own exemplary policies and procedures.
- To chair and attend partner/provider meetings and senior management meetings where this policy will be monitored. In addition, monitor any cases of reported allegations or risk, if and when they arise, and report these to the appropriate Senior Manager and Adult Learning & Skills Management Team.

Categories of Abuse or Neglect

There is no limit as to what constitutes abuse or neglect as they can take many forms and the individual circumstances of each case should always be considered. The definitions of Abuse and Neglect as defined in the care act are as follows:-

Domestic Violence: including psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse and so called 'honour' based violence.

Physical Abuse: *This can include but is not limited to* hitting, slapping, pushing, misuse of medication, restraint or inappropriate physical sanctions.

Sexual Abuse: *This can include but is not limited to* rape and sexual assault or sexual acts to which the adult has not consented or was pressured into consenting.

Psychological Abuse: *This can include but is not limited to* emotional abuse, threats of harm or abandonment, deprivation of contact, humiliation, blaming, controlling, intimidation, coercion, harassment, verbal abuse, isolation or unreasonable and unjustified withdrawal of services or supportive networks.

Exploitation: Either opportunistically or premeditated, unfairly manipulating someone for profit or personal gain.

Financial or Material Abuse: *This can include but is not limited to* theft, fraud, exploitation, coercion in relation to an adult's financial affairs or arrangements, including in connection with wills, property, inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits.

Neglect and Acts of Omission: *This can include but is not limited to* ignoring medical or physical care needs, failure to provide access to appropriate health, care and support or educational services, the withholding of the necessities of life, such as medication, adequate nutrition and heating.

Discriminatory Abuse: *This can include but is not limited to* discrimination on grounds of race, gender and gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and other forms of harassment, slurs or similar treatment.

Organisational Abuse: *This can include but is not limited to* neglect and poor care practice within an institution or specific care setting like a hospital or care home, for example. This may range from isolated incidents to continuing ill-treatment.

Any or all of these types of abuse may be perpetrated as a result of deliberate intent, negligence or ignorance.

Protecting adults at risk of abuse is everyone's responsibility, and raising a concern cannot be identified as someone else's responsibility. The general public, along with professional organisations directly associated with the Safeguarding Adult Board, have a responsibility to make an alert following the identified procedure.

The definition of an adult at risk is a person aged 18 or over and who:

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs) and
- is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect; and
- as a result of those care and support needs is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse.

Appendix 3 - Confidentiality

Never promise confidentiality; instead, you should tell anyone making a disclosure that only other people who will deal with the matter will be informed.

It is important to bear in mind that personal information can only be disclosed *lawfully* and *fairly*.

In terms of *lawfulness* information may only be disclosed when the individual gives consent, or where there is an over-riding public interest or justification to do so.

In terms of *fairness*, consideration needs to be given to the individual's rights to the knowledge that information may be shared in some circumstances namely:

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998, section 115, states that you have a power to share information with anyone from the Local Authority, Probation, Health and Police, if it is felt that a crime has or might be committed.

Records will be kept of all such incidents and their outcomes and held by the Designated Safeguarding Officer in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Under the law they may be shared with the police and the ISA – and also Local Safeguarding Boards upon request.

Skills and Learning staff may have access to confidential information about its learners and customers in order to undertake their responsibilities. In some circumstances they may have access to or be given highly sensitive or private information. These details must be kept confidential at all times and only shared when it is in the interests of the child, young person or adult to do so. Such information must not be used to intimidate, humiliate, or embarrass the child, young person or adult concerned.

If a member of staff who works with a child, young person or adult is in any doubt about whether to share information or keep it confidential he or she should seek guidance from a **Designated Safeguarding Officer**. Any actions should be taken in line with the Skills and Learning Service's Instructions for the Security of Personal Data and Wigan Council Policy Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy.

The storing and processing of personal information about a child, young person or adult is governed by the Data Protection Act 1998. Any information should be stored and processed in line with Skills and Learning Service's Instructions for the Security of Personal Data and Wigan Council Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy.

Whilst staff need to be aware of the need to listen and support a child, young person or adult, they must also understand the importance of not promising to keep secrets; neither should they request this of a child, young person or adult under any circumstances.

Additionally, concerns and allegations about members of staff should be treated as confidential and passed to a **Designated Safeguarding Officer** without delay.

All staff should be aware that in accordance with statutory requirements where safeguarding issues are involved, it is not possible to offer confidentiality to a person under 18 as any disclosures must be reported. The Public Interest Disclosures Act protects those who expose criminal offences.

Appendix 4 - Risk Management

Risk taking is defined as “*Choosing to act (or not act) to achieve beneficial results in an awareness that harm might result*”.

Management of risk is a crucial part of our safeguarding policy and should be minimised by taking appropriate action.

DBS checks

- All tutors/advisers/assessors teaching, training or instructing any child or any groups of learners identified as wholly at risk will have an enhanced DBS check including a check against the children’s barred list. This will include tutors delivering Family Learning.
- A single central register of DBS checks will be maintained by the Adult Learning and Skills Team.
- The Adult Learning and Skills Management Team take direction from the Council’s HR and Legal department regarding the level of DBS check needed for staff

Learners

- Have a comprehensive induction which covers Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities and safeguarding.
- Learners have access to information on how to keep safe when using technology.
- The complaints and grievance procedure clearly states what a learner should do if they have complaints about safety-related matters.
- Course evaluation and learner feedback surveys include a question on how safe and secure learners feel throughout the course.
- Observations of teaching, learning and assessment monitor the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

Staff should always feel able to discuss with their **Designated Safeguarding Officer** any difficulties or problems that may affect their relationship with children, young people and adults so that appropriate support can be provided or action can be taken.

It is essential that accurate and comprehensive records are maintained wherever concerns are raised about the conduct or actions of staff working with or on behalf of children, young people and adults.

Appendix 5 - Wigan Council Whistleblowing Policy

Please refer to the Council intranet for the updated policy.

Overarching Policy

[MyEmployment/Working-life/Your-responsibilities/Whistleblowing.aspx](#)

School Based Policy

[Schools/Human-resources/Your-responsibilities/Whistleblowing-schools.aspx](#)

Appendix 6 - Avoiding Allegations

Staff are advised to be very clear about the professional boundaries when working with young people and adults by:

- Ensuring that activities which involve a lone young person or adult take place in a room which can be easily observed by others or the doors should be left open.
- Avoiding all occasions where a single adult is in the company of a lone young person or adult, particularly where there is little or no possibility of the activity being supervised or observed.
- Not meeting with a young person away from the centre or workplace without a parent or responsible adult being present.
- Keeping to a minimum physical contact, which should only take place where there is a genuine reason in relation to the activity. Never make contact with intimate body areas or say anything which could be construed as sexually suggestive.
- Never use verbal interactions which are demeaning or belittling. Care should be taken so that statements cannot be misconstrued and that innuendo is avoided.
- Not sharing personal or sensitive information inappropriately e.g. home address, personal email etc.
- Communication between children and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs. Adults should not share any personal information with a child or young person. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the child/young person, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.
- Adults should also be circumspect in their communications with children so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. They should not give their personal contact details to children and young people including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with senior management and parents/carers. E-mail or text communications between an adult and a child young person outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet based web sites.
- Internal e-mail systems should only be used in accordance with the organisation's policy.

Appendix 7

DSL Safeguarding Referral Process

Alert made to Adults Central Duty Team – Telephone: 01942 828777, Children's Central Duty - 01942 828300

Central Duty Team call handler will document all the required information and if required will seek advice from duty social worker within team. Central Duty Team review alert and have 3 options at this stage

Forward concern to Quality Assurance Team

Forward concern for safeguarding consideration

Identify 'No Further Action' required

If alert is identified as potential safeguarding concern, notification will be forwarded to appropriate locality social work team

The allocated or Duty Social Worker will hold a strategy discussion with the Team Manager or Senior Social Worker and identify if safeguarding procedures are the most appropriate route to deal with the alert. This discussion will occur within 24 hours of receiving notification.

If at Strategy discussion the safeguarding route is considered appropriate, the alert is then logged as a formal safeguarding referral, and confirmation of progression will be sent to the alerter via email

The Team Manager / Senior Social Worker will arrange a strategy meeting with appropriate professionals to gather additional information.(within 7 working days from strategy discussion).

If the outcome of the strategy meeting is to proceed to investigation, the chair of the strategy meeting will identify what the focus of the investigation will be and any additional information that may be required

If at the strategy meeting, the chair is unable to proceed to investigation due to insufficient information, a time frame will be allocated to gather additional information and a second strategy meeting may be called

Once the formal decision is made to proceed to investigation, the case will proceed to a safeguarding case conference. This should be held no later than 20 working days following the decision to investigate is made.

At the earliest opportunity the lead investigator will make a request for case conference to the Local Authority Strategic Safeguarding Team to make arrangements to hold and independently chair the case conference

All relevant participants will be invited to attend the case conference, including the adult at risk / their representative and alleged perpetrator / representative of the organisation or individual the alleged abuse relates

All professionals present at the meeting will be given an opportunity to identify if on the balance of probability based on the information provided did abuse occur, not occur or was inconclusive

If appropriate a protection plan will be developed by all professionals at the case conference. If the adult a risk is no longer resident in the relevant organisation, a protection plan may be developed to reduce the risk of the incident occurring to others

The chair will call a review meeting to ensure assurance is gained in relation to the protection plan. This will usually occur within 4-6 weeks of the initial safeguarding case conference

