



MERCIA PARTNERSHIP

Safeguarding and Prevent Policy

Introduction

The Prevent and Safeguarding Policy for Mercia Partnership reflects the importance of our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all our learners and staff by protecting them from physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect and bullying. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our learners so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every learners should be able to participate in all learning and social activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm.

Mercia Partnership have a statutory requirement under Sections 27 and 47 of the Children Act 1989 to assist the Local Authority Social Services Department acting on behalf of children in need. Mercia Partnership will safeguard and promote the welfare of children in compliance with the DfE guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education (July 2015) KCSIE (September 2016)* and associated guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015) WT in addition to the Care Act 2014*. Mercia Partnership also complies with the statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care (January 2014) and The Prevent Duty (The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act June 2015) and Social Media for Online Radicalisation (July 2015) and this Policy should be read in conjunction with these procedures and guidance.

The main aims of this policy are to ensure that staff are fully engaged in being vigilant about raising awareness; that they overcome professional disbelief that such issues will not happen at Mercia Partnership and ensure that we work alongside other professional bodies and agencies to ensure that our learners and staff are safe from harm.

Radicalisation is defined as the act or process of making a person more radical or favouring of extreme or fundamental changes in political, economic or social conditions, institutions or habits of the mind. Extremism is defined as the holding of extreme political or religious views. At Mercia Partnership, we are fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all learners and staff. We recognise that safeguarding against radicalisation is no different from safeguarding against any other vulnerability.

At Mercia Partnership, all employees are expected to uphold and promote the fundamental principles of British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

The principle objectives of this policy are that:

- All staff will understand what radicalisation and extremism are and why we need to be vigilant.
- All learners and staff will know that Mercia Partnership has policies in place to keep them safe from harm and that Mercia Partnership regularly reviews its systems to ensure they are appropriate and effective.

Mercia Partnership curriculum promotes respect, tolerance, and diversity. Learners and staff are encouraged to share their views and recognise that they are entitled to have their own different beliefs which should not be used to influence others.

It is recognised that learners or staff with low aspirations are more vulnerable to radicalisation and, therefore, we strive to equip our learners and staff with confidence, self-belief, respect and tolerance as well as setting high standards and expectations for themselves.

Learners and staff are briefed during induction about how to stay safe when using the Internet and are encouraged to recognise that people are not always who they say they are online. They are taught to seek help if they are upset or concerned about anything they read or see on the Internet.

Inappropriate websites are banned and cannot be accessed from Mercia Partnership premises.

Mercia Partnership staff, contractors, associates and volunteers will undertake appropriate training to ensure that they are clear about their role and the parameters of their responsibilities including their statutory safeguarding duties.

Through various training opportunities within Mercia Partnership, we will ensure that our staff are fully aware of the threats, risks and vulnerabilities that are linked to radicalisation; are aware of the process of radicalisation and how this might be identified early on.

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Prevent

Another aspect of safeguarding is the PREVENT duty, which requires the Education sector to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism", supporting terrorism or being drawn into non-violent extremism.

Counter-Terrorism and Security Act

Sect 26 CTS Act places a duty on certain bodies (specified authorities – listed in Schedule 6) to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.

Guidance is issued under Section 29 of the Act:

- Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it
- Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support
- Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to address

Purpose of Prevent

- Prevent aims to safeguard vulnerable individuals (both adults and children) who may be at risk of potentially becoming involved in terrorist activities.
- It also aims to support institutions, such as schools, colleges and universities where this may happen.
- All frontline staff have a responsibility to report any instances where they think they have identified a

Safeguarding issue to their Safeguarding Officer Responsibilities

- All provider staff have a legal responsibility under the Prevent Duty to make sure that
- They have undertaken training in the Prevent Duty as identified by their management
- They are aware of when it is appropriate to refer concerns about learners to the Prevent officer, usually the provider’s Safeguarding officer
- They exemplify British values of "democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs" into their practice

The Prevent Strategy will specifically

- Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it.
- Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support and work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which we need to address.

What is CONTEST?

CONTEST is the Government's Counter Terrorism Strategy, published in July 2006 and refreshed in March 2009. The aim of the strategy is 'to reduce the risk from international terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence.'

CONTEST has four strands, often known as the four Ps. The aims of the 4 Ps are:

- PREVENT - to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism.
- PURSUE - to stop terrorist attacks through disruption, investigation and detection.
- PREPARE - where an attack cannot be stopped, to mitigate its impact.
- PROTECT - to strengthen against terrorist attack, including borders, utilities, transport, infrastructure and crowded places.

What is Extremism?

The Government has defined extremism as "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs". This also includes calls for the death of members of the British armed forces.

What is Terrorism?

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 of 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.

What is radicalisation?

People can be drawn into violence or they can be exposed to the messages of extremist groups by many means. The risk of radicalisation is the product of a number of factors and identifying this risk requires that staff exercise their professional judgement, seeking further advice as necessary. It may be combined with other vulnerabilities or may be the only risk identified. Potential indicators include:

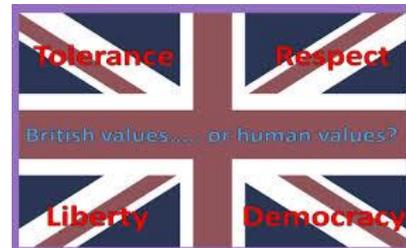
- Use of inappropriate language
- Possession of violent extremist literature
- Behavioural changes
- The expression of extremist views
- Advocating violent actions and means
- Association with known extremists
- Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology

The Government has defined extremism as "vocal or active opposition to fundamental British Values", which include:

- Individual liberty
- Rule of law
- Democracy

Mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. This includes not discriminating against those with protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010), namely:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation



Channel

What is Channel?

Channel is an early intervention multi - agency process designed to safeguard vulnerable people from being drawn into violent extremist or terrorist behaviour. Channel works in a similar way to existing safeguarding partnerships aimed at protecting vulnerable people.

Who does Channel work with?

Channel is designed to work with individuals of any age who are at risk of being exploited by extremist or terrorist ideologues. The process is shaped around the circumstances of each person and can provide support for any form of radicalisation or personal vulnerabilities.

How does Channel work?

Each Channel Panel is chaired by a local authority and brings together a range of multi - agency partners to collectively assess the risk and can decide whether a support package is needed. The group may include statutory and non - statutory partners, as well as lead safeguarding professionals.

If the group feels the person would be suitable for Channel, it will look to develop a package of support that is bespoke to the person. The partnership approach ensures those with specific knowledge and expertise around the vulnerabilities of those at risk are able to work together to provide the best support.

What does Channel support look like?

Channel interventions are delivered through local partners and specialist agencies. The support may focus on a person's vulnerabilities around health, education, employment or housing, as well as specialist mentoring or faith guidance and broader diversionary activities such as sport. Each support package is tailored to the person and their particular circumstances.

How will the person be involved in this process?

A person will always be informed first if it's felt that they would benefit from Channel support. The process is voluntary, and their consent would be needed before taking part in the process. This process is managed carefully by the Channel Panel.

Who can make a referral?

Anyone can make a referral. Referrals come from a wide range of partners including education, health, youth offending teams, police and social services.

What happens with the referral?

Referrals are first screened for suitability through a preliminary assessment by the Channel Coordinator and the local authority. If suitable, the case is then discussed at a Channel panel of relevant partners to decide if support is necessary. Raising a concern If you believe that someone is vulnerable to being exploited or radicalised, please use the established safeguarding or duty of care procedures within your organisation to escalate your concerns to the appropriate leads, who can raise concerns to Channel if appropriate.

Safeguarding

Mercia Partnership programmes are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all learners including young people and vulnerable adults.

- A vulnerable adult is defined as a person whom:
- 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 or neglect

Employers also have a responsibility to the learners they employ. We also recognise that we have a duty to help employers, staff and learners to recognise their responsibilities, through guidance, support and training. As the employer of a learner, it is important that you understand your responsibilities to the learner and what safeguarding means to you. The following information should provide answers to some of the questions you may have. If they are not answered here, please get in touch with us using the contact details provided.

The aims of this Policy are:

- To identify the expectations of staff in relation to safeguarding
- To ensure relevant and effective safeguarding practices are in place
- To ensure the right of every applicant and learner to learn within a safe environment
- To promote awareness to staff of the need to safeguard children and to recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
- To ensure that the fundamental rights and needs of our applicants and learners are observed
- To prevent abuse through the pastoral support offered to all applicants and learners
- To raise awareness of different types of abuse and children in need issues
- To provide guidelines for staff in handling matters relating to actual or suspected child abuse
- To ensure staff act professionally
- To deter potential, unsuitable individuals from applying to Mercia Partnership by demonstrating our attentiveness and vigilance in relation to safeguarding through our website and job advertisements
- To reject at interview stage anyone where we have doubts about suitability
- To prevent the risk of abuse by ensuring procedures and standards are in place
- Centres to enable all staff to recognise the signs and report accordingly

What is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding regulations have been around for a while, across a wide range of legislation, but were brought together by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. This legislation provides definitions of children and vulnerable adults and sets out the legislative framework of measures to protect them from harm.

- Promotion of your health and development
- Ensuring your safety and care
- Ensuring you are offered the best life chances
- Protection from abuse and neglect
- Prevention of bullying and harassment

The term 'safeguarding' embraces both child and vulnerable adult protection and preventative approaches to keep our students, staff and employers safe. Safeguarding encompasses students' health and safety, welfare and well-being.

Mercia Partnership is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and employers to share this commitment. We have developed a Safeguarding Policy and Procedure that aims to meet this commitment.

Definitions

Safeguard	Protect from harm or damage with an appropriate measure.
Vulnerable	Exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either physically or emotionally.
A vulnerable adult	Is in need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, or risk of abuse or neglect.
Safeguarding	Is the process of protecting vulnerable people, whether from crime, other forms of abuse or from being drawn into terrorism - related activity?
Vulnerability	Describes the condition of being capable of being injured; difficult to defend; open to moral or ideological attack. Within Prevent, the word describes factors and characteristics associated with being susceptible to radicalisation

Physical abuse	Is defined as the use of physical force that may result in bodily injury, physical pain, or impairment. Physical abuse may include but is not limited to such acts of violence striking, hitting, beating, pushing, shoving, shaking, kicking, pinching and burning.
Emotional/psychological abuse	A person subjecting another to behaviour that may result in psychological trauma, including anxiety, chronic depression, or post - traumatic stress disorder.
Financial abuse	Tactic used by abusers to limit and restrict their victims' access to their finances. For example, a young adult having their benefits taken away from them.
Neglect by others	Where a parent, carer or guardian will actively and knowingly fail to care for or attend to the basic needs of a child or vulnerable adult. For example, not feeding a child and/or leaving them in the same clothes and not helping them wash for days on end.
Self - neglect	Is any failure of an adult to take care of themselves? It could be a result of poor health, depression, cognitive problems or being physically unable to care for themselves. In this situation, family and carers would be expected to pick up on these signs and give or apply for appropriate care.
Discriminatory abuse	Is when you are picked out deliberately for unfair treatment because of a protected characteristic. For example, a vulnerable adult is picked on by an employer because of their disability.
Organisational abuse	Is where an institution fails to provide basic care for its residents. It is also related to gang culture where an individual is forced into committing crime for the financial gain of gang leaders.

Why is safeguarding necessary for employed learners?

Providers of government funded training have a duty to safeguard their learners and to take such steps that try to ensure the safety of its learners (children under 18 or vulnerable adults) at all times. As part of that duty, we will talk to you about what you can do to ensure that learners are not exposed to threats or dangers.

What are the responsibilities of an Employer?

- To understand what is meant by safeguarding and promote the welfare of learners
- Be aware of your statutory duties towards the welfare of children and vulnerable adults
- Be familiar with our guidance, in particular, the reporting arrangements
- It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure employees working alongside learners are free from convictions and of sound character and judgement and will not pose as any threat or danger to learners.
- What do I do if my learner discloses information to me?
- Reassure the learner that they have done the right thing
- Record what the learner said, using their words where possible. sign and date the record
- Inform our Designated Person or deputy as soon as possible and pass on the written record
- Maintain confidentiality and do not discuss with others
- Listen without making judgements
- Stay calm
- Try not to ask questions, but if you must, make sure they are open - ended questions to clarify understanding and not to probe or investigate
- Don't give an opinion or offer advice
- Don't promise confidentiality - explain you may need to talk to a designated safeguarding officer

Employees working closely with children or vulnerable learners should be alert to the possibilities of harm and they should inform only and not investigate or offer advice.

If any member of staff has a safeguarding issue brought to their attention, they must treat it as a matter of urgency and contact one of our Designated Safeguarding Team.

Any concern must be documented and emailed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead within 2 hours of the disclosure. Unless the child is in immediate harm, where the relevant authorities will be contacted immediately. In this situation ensure that the child is accompanied and kept safe until the relevant authorities arrive.

Reporting For FGM

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act 2003 (“the 2003 Act”). It is a form of child abuse and violence against women. FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non - medical reasons. The FGM mandatory reporting duty is a legal duty provided for in the FGM Act 2003 (as amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015). The legislation requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to make a report to the police where, in the course of their professional duties, they either:

- Are informed by a girl under 18 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

For the purposes of the duty, the relevant age is the girl’s age at the time of the disclosure/identification of FGM (i.e. it does not apply where a woman aged 18 or over discloses, she had FGM when she was under 18). Complying with the duty does not breach any confidentiality requirement or other restriction on disclosure which might otherwise apply. The duty is a personal duty which requires the individual professional who becomes aware of the case to make a report; the responsibility cannot be transferred. The only exception to this is if you know that another individual from your profession has already made a report; there is no requirement to make a second.

Reports under the duty should be made as soon as possible after a case is discovered, and best practice is for reports to be made by the close of the next working day, unless any of the factors described below are present. You should act with at least the same urgency as is required by your local safeguarding processes.

A longer timeframe than the next working day may be appropriate in exceptional cases where, for example, a professional has concerns that a report to the police is likely to result in an immediate safeguarding risk to the child (or another child, e.g. a sibling) and considers that consultation with colleagues or other agencies is necessary prior to the report being made.

If you think you are dealing with such a case, you are strongly advised to consult colleagues, including your designated safeguarding lead, as soon as practicable, and to keep a record of any decisions made. It is important to remember that the safety of the girl is the priority.

It is recommended that you make a report orally by calling 101, the single non - emergency number. You should be prepared to provide the call handler with the following information:

Explain that you are making a report under the FGM mandatory reporting duty

- Your details: Name, contact details (work telephone number and e - mail address) and times when you will be available to be called back, job role, place of work.
- Details of your organisation’s designated safeguarding lead: name, contact details (work telephone number and e - mail address), place of work
- The girl’s details: name, age/date of birth, address

Throughout the process, you should ensure that you keep a comprehensive record of any discussions held and subsequent decisions made, in line with standard safeguarding practice. This will include the circumstances surrounding the initial identification or disclosure of FGM, details of any safeguarding actions which were taken, and when and how you reported the case to the police (including the case reference number). You should also ensure that your organisation's designated safeguarding lead is kept updated as appropriate.

In line with safeguarding best practice, you should contact the girl and/or her parents or guardians as appropriate to explain the report, why it is being made, and what it means.

Wherever possible, you should have this discussion in advance of/in parallel to the report being made. However, if you believe that telling the child/parents about the report may result in a risk of serious harm to the child or anyone else, or of the family fleeing the country, you should not discuss it.

FGM is child abuse, and employers and the professional regulators are expected to pay due regard to the seriousness of breaches of the duty.

Cyberbullying

What is cyberbullying?

- Cyberbullying involves the use of electronic communication devices to bully people. These include mobile phones, tablets, iPods, laptops and PCs
- Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp are used by cyberbullies to put out their communications

Who is most at risk?

- Children using social media unsupervised
- Vulnerable adults are particularly at risk if they are using social media, as they may be more emotionally and mentally susceptible to the abuse

Definitions

Flaming	Online fights usually through emails, instant messaging or chat rooms where angry and rude comments are exchanged.
Denigration	Putting mean online messages through email, instant messaging, chat rooms, or websites set up to make fun of someone.
Exclusion	Intentionally leaving someone out of a group such as instant messaging, friend sites, or other online group activities.
Outing	Sharing secrets about someone online including private information, pictures, and videos.
Impersonation	Tricking someone into revealing personal information then sharing it with others.
Harassment	Repeatedly sending malicious messages to someone online.
Cyberstalking	Continuously harassing and denigration including threats of physical harm.

Grooming

What does the term grooming mean?

- Grooming is a word to describe people befriending children and vulnerable adults to take advantage of them for sexual preferences
- Grooming is also used by extremist groups to radicalise individuals in to supporting and potentially committing terrorist attacks
- You will probably associate grooming with children, and predominantly this is what you will hear and see in the media on the subject, but it does also affect vulnerable adults

What is sexual online grooming?

- Sexual online grooming is when people form relationships with children pretending to be their friend, using social media platforms to do so
- The person carrying out the online grooming will try to establish the likelihood of the child telling someone. They will also find out as much as they can on the child's family and social networks
- Online groomers will tend to use chatrooms, which are focussed on young people. There are countless teen chat rooms on the internet
- Those carrying out the grooming will pretend to be a child themselves, similar in age to the person they are grooming. They will even change their gender to make it easier to befriend the person they are grooming
- Grooming online is anonymous and children find it easier to trust an online 'friend' than someone they have met 'face to face'

Online Grooming

How do you know if a child is being groomed online?

- Wanting to spend more and more time on the internet
- Being secretive about who they are talking to online and what sites they visit
- Switching screens when you come near the computer
- Possessing items – electronic devices or phones – you haven't given them
- Using sexual language, you wouldn't expect them to know
- Becoming emotionally volatile

Grooming – In Person

- Groomers will hide their true intentions and may spend a long time gaining a child or vulnerable adults trust
- They may try to gain the trust of the whole family to allow them to be left alone with a child or vulnerable adult
- Groomers may deliberately try to work with children or vulnerable adults and gain the trust of their colleagues

To gain trust, groomers will

- Pretend to be someone they are not, for example saying they are the same age online
- Offer advice or understanding
- Buy gifts
- Give the child or vulnerable adult attention
- Use their professional position or reputation
- Take them on trips, outings or holidays

Children or vulnerable adults may not speak out about their situation because they;

- Feel ashamed
- Feel guilty
- Are unaware that they are being abused
- Believe they are in a relationship with a 'boyfriend' or 'girlfriend'

Safer Recruitment

Mercia Partnership carries out a safe recruitment process and ensures that all appropriate checks are carried out on new staff that will work or come into contact with children and adults at risk in line with the Disclosure and Barring Service requirements. See resourcing policy for further detail on recruitment procedures.

Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is an executive agency of the Home Office and its primary purpose is to help employers make safer recruitment decisions and appointments. By conducting checks and providing details of criminal records and other relevant information, DBS helps to identify applicants who may be unsuitable for certain work and positions, especially those involving contact with children (those less than 18 years old) or adults at risk.

Depending on the type and regularity of contact with children or adults at risk involved in a particular role, employers are entitled to make appropriate types of enquiry about the applicant's criminal record and seek a disclosure through a DBS check.

Mercia Partnership can undertake five types of criminal records checks depending on the role applied for:

1. Standard DBS check

This will be for positions that are included in the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975. This type of check contains details of individual's convictions, cautions, reprimands or warnings recorded on police central records and includes both 'spent' and 'unspent' convictions that will be shown on a criminal records check.

2. Enhanced DBS check

This will be for positions included in both the ROA 1974 Exceptions Order and in the Police Act 1997 regulations. This type of check contains the same details as the standard check plus any information held locally by police forces that it is reasonably considered to be relevant to the post applied for.

3. Enhanced DBS & barred list check (child)

An enhanced check with information from the DBS's children's barred list is only available for those individuals engaged in regulated activity with children and a small number of posts as listed in the Police Act 1997 regulations.

4. Enhanced DBS & barred list check (adult)

An enhanced check with information from the DBS's adults barred list is only available for those individuals engaged in regulated activity with adults and a small number of posts as listed in the Police Act 1997 regulations.

5. Enhanced DBS & barred list check (child and adult)

An enhanced check with information from the DBS's children and adults barred list is only available for those individuals engaged in regulated activity with both vulnerable groups including children and a small number of posts as listed in the Police Act regulations.

Reporting a Concern

If the learner has a concern over their own personal welfare and wellbeing, you are to listen to and record all information given, making no judgement or assumptions. Take any actions required to secure the immediate safety of the child or adult at risk if deemed appropriate, this may involve staying with them until a responsible adult can be located. This will only be recorded on the reporting form if learner agrees and raised with the SDSO if learner agrees. You must report the issue to the designated officer, regardless of whether the learner agrees.

The designated officer will then decide the appropriate course of action, and if a referral outside the organisation is appropriate.

If a learner/parent has a concern/allegation about a member of Mercia Partnership staff:

- All learners are to be informed that if they have a concern over their own personal welfare and wellbeing that they do not feel comfortable talking to their tutor about, they are to contact Mercia Partnership Designated Officer.
- Contact details for the designated person are available in this policy and on Mercia Partnership external website.
- If a parent contacts, you to report a concern about their child. Ensure you listen and record the details as per a learner reporting a concern to you.
- Ensure you have contact details for the parent. You must report the issue to the designated officer. The designated officer will then decide the appropriate course of action, and if a referral outside the organisation is appropriate, liaise with the parent as appropriate.
- Be mindful of confidentiality as all learners aged 16 and above and of employed status are deemed to be adults, and therefore no information should be passed to parents or carers without prior content to do so from the learner.
- If you observe a safeguarding issue taking place within the working practices of an employer's setting - example would be a practitioner hitting a child or observing inappropriate restraint techniques. Take action to stop the activity immediately, and inform the individual of your concerns, ask them to remove themselves from the area and advise them you will inform their senior manager.
- Take any actions to secure the safety of the child or adult at risk, this may involve staying with them until a responsible adult can be located. Inform your designated safeguarding officer. Be mindful of differences between poor practice and a safeguarding issue and apply your action appropriately.
- If a learner reports unsafe practices or safeguarding issues to you with in their working environment advise the learner to follow in house reporting or whistle blowing procedures. You may support the learner in speaking to the appropriate senior team members. Report the incident to your designated safeguarding officer who will offer additional guidance and signposting for the learner and will monitor.
- It is important you do not pass any information to other parties or try to investigate the concern yourself. All concerns should be reported to the designated safeguarding officer as soon as possible.

Keeping Yourself Safe

To maintain yours and the learner's safety, the following are strictly prohibited:

- Befriending learners on personal social media sites
- Distributing personal telephone numbers
- Visit learners at home or transporting learners to and from locations (this includes travelling in the car with a learner driving)
- Do not use sarcasm, insults or belittling comments towards learners
- Personal relationships with learners

It also important to be mindful of the following when conducting yourself:

- You will naturally build a rapport with learners through the programme contact, and the learners may see you as a confident and support but be sure to maintain professional boundaries whenever carrying out work on Mercia Partnership behalf.
- Be respectful of all young and vulnerable people, and appreciate you are in a position of trust. We have the opportunity to listen to their concerns and support them.
- Uphold confidentiality within certain remits when required, by the situation, but be careful not to promise to keep secrets or ask others to do so.
- Avoid spending time alone with learners in a closed environment. If this is unavoidable for example during a formal assessment/ examination, ensure a member of the site staff is aware where you are and monitors this.
- Be careful when giving learner advice – as this is based on your opinion, focus support around information (facts) and guidance (signposting).
- If at any point, you feel unsafe in a learner's company inform the site manager, your line manager, the designated safeguarding officer and leave the premises.