

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

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This document must be approved annually by Senior Leadership Team and presented to the Advisory Boards.

1. Purpose & intent

This policy ensures that our recruitment and operational practices align with child protection and safeguarding principles. We are committed to promoting safeguarding and to providing clear guidance on how to recognise and respond to potential risks that may place a child in harm’s way. In addition, this policy highlights the risks of modern slavery and human trafficking, including how to identify indicators of exploitation and how to report concerns appropriately.

At Best Practice Network, we firmly believe that no child, young person, or vulnerable adult should experience any form of abuse. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of individuals within our training environments and those who engage with our organisation.

Best Practice Network is committed to the following principles:

- The welfare of each individual is paramount.
- Every person, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation, or identity, has the right to equal protection from all forms of harm or abuse.
- Collaboration with young people, vulnerable adults, their parents, carers, and relevant agencies is essential to ensuring their safety and wellbeing.

2. Scope & definition

This policy applies to all members of the Best Practice Network (BPN) Senior Leadership Team, employees, associates, facilitators, mentors, learners, service providers, and volunteers. It covers all programmes delivered by BPN to apprentices, trainees, and candidates, including those working directly with children.

All employees and associates must read and acknowledge this policy before undertaking work with BPN. The policy is accessible to all stakeholders on our website: [Best Practice Network Policies](#)

Definitions

- Child or Young Person – Any individual under the age of 18, as defined by legislation.
- Vulnerable Adult – As set out in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, an individual aged 18 or over who requires community care services due to mental or physical disability, age, or illness and who may be unable to protect themselves from significant harm or exploitation.

A vulnerable adult may include individuals who:

- Have a physical or sensory disability
- Are physically frail or have a chronic illness
- Have a mental illness, dementia, or a learning disability
- Are elderly and frail
- Misuse drugs and/or alcohol
- Live in sheltered housing or a care home
- Exhibit challenging behaviour
- Are detained in custody
- Receive payments from a local authority
- Require healthcare services

Vulnerability is context-dependent, and each case must be considered individually.

- Significant Harm – The threshold for intervention by external agencies.
- British Values – Defined as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs.
- BPN promotes respect for others, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, ensuring inclusivity across all protected characteristics.

3. Overview of our policy

Safeguarding Commitment

Best Practice Network is fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, apprentices, and vulnerable adults. We take all reasonable steps to protect them from physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, neglect, and harm, ensuring their safety, wellbeing, and development.

Our Safeguarding Pledge

We will:

- Provide a safe and supportive environment for learning and development.
- Proactively identify individuals who may be at risk of harm or suffering significant harm.
- Take swift and appropriate action to protect and safeguard those in our care.

Safe Recruitment & Partnerships

We rigorously DBS-vet all employees and carry out all necessary background checks, regardless of role.

We require suppliers, partners, and associates to adhere to our safeguarding policies and procedures.

We ensure effective supervision, training, and quality assurance across all operations.

Given our work across multiple schools and settings, it is essential that our staff and associates have the necessary checks, knowledge, and skills to perform their roles safely and effectively.

Our Definition of Safeguarding

For Best Practice Network, safeguarding and promoting welfare means:

- Protecting children and vulnerable adults from maltreatment and peer-on-peer abuse.
- Promoting and monitoring digital safety when using the internet, social media, or mobile devices provided by BPN.
- Preventing impairment to health, development, or wellbeing.
- Providing safe and effective care to help children and vulnerable adults thrive.
- Supporting positive outcomes so that young people can achieve their full potential and transition successfully into adulthood.

4. Safeguarding commitment at Best Practice Network

Best Practice Network (BPN) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults, in accordance with:

The Children Act 1989 and 2004 (statutory duties to protect children's welfare).

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023) (multi-agency safeguarding guidance).

The Care Act 2014 (protection of vulnerable adults).

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025) (statutory guidance for education providers).

Apprenticeships Safeguarding Duty / ESFA requirements (safeguarding requirements for training providers).

Implementation

- Staff and Associates
- All employees, freelancers, and contractors must adhere to this policy, with commitment clauses embedded in their contracts.
- Regular updates are provided through mandatory training, briefings, and newsletters.
- Learners and Apprentices
- This policy is included in all programme handbooks and forms part of the induction process.
- For apprentices, safeguarding is reinforced during monthly progress reviews, aligning with DfE and funding compliance requirements.
- Reporting and Accountability
- Concerns must be reported in line with our internal procedures, which reflect Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (organisational responsibility for safeguarding).
- Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action, in line with employment law and Ofsted/ESFA safeguarding expectations.

5. Safer Recruitment - recruitment of employees

Best Practice Network (BPN) is committed to responsible employment practices and to full compliance with relevant legislation. This includes excluding individuals with specific convictions from roles involving access to young people or vulnerable adults where a recognised risk exists.

As part of this commitment:

- All vacancies are routinely reviewed to assess associated safeguarding risks.
- Employment offers are conditional upon satisfactory completion of: A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check; and the HMG Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS).
- Failure to meet these standards will result in the offer being withdrawn.
- Providing false or incomplete disclosure may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal.
- DBS checks are risk-assessed according to role, and all related data is handled confidentially under the Data Protection Act. New employees (from March 2024) must register with the DBS Update Service within one month of receiving their certificate. Employees with pre-March 2024 DBS checks will undergo a new check after 3 years and then join the Update Service. Recruitment Policy Compliance: BPN's Safer Recruitment Policy requires trained interviewers who understand safer

recruitment processes; all new starters to complete DBS/BPSS checks, receive a safeguarding briefing, and complete child protection/safeguarding training (online and in-house Prevent training) within their first month; line managers and HR to maintain logs evidencing compliance; and a central register aligned with KCSIE requirements.

6. Safer recruitment -Recruitment of associates

Contractual Agreement: Every new associate must sign a contract confirming compliance with the BPN Safeguarding Policy and Procedures. This includes confirming that they have completed safeguarding/child protection training and Prevent Duty training and that they agree to undertake annual refresher training.

Onboarding Process: HR will issue these documents as part of the onboarding process. Annual updates will be communicated to all associates.

Pre-Contract Requirements: Any individual contracted to work for BPN must provide the following in advance:

- Date of Birth
- DBS registration number and date
- Proof of registration to the DBS Update Service (where available)

Accountability: The line manager and HR share responsibility for ensuring compliance and maintaining an audit log as evidence. **Safer Recruitment Policy:** BPN's Safer Recruitment Policy must always be followed.

7. Safer recruitment - Ongoing responsibility for employees and associates

1. **Pre-Deployment Checks & Induction** – BPN managers must not assign employees or associates to work on behalf of BPN until all required safeguarding checks and inductions have been completed.
2. **Annual & Ad-Hoc Briefings** – The BPN Safeguarding Team will deliver annual briefing sessions for all employees. Additional briefings will be delivered when new legislation or requirements arise. Non-attendees will receive the briefing materials via circulation.
3. **Line Manager Responsibilities** – Line managers, commissioners, and contractors must include safeguarding as a standing agenda item in employee updates and training and collaborate with HR to ensure compliance with safeguarding measures.
4. **Ongoing Suitability Declarations** – All employees and associates must complete an annual suitability declaration. Employees: Declarations will be stored in the online HR system. Associates: Declarations will be stored on the associate dashboard.

8. Safeguarding good practice

Commitment to Safeguarding – Best Practice Network acknowledges its duty to act promptly and responsibly on any report or suspicion of abuse or neglect.

Responsibilities of Staff and Partners – All individuals working with children, young people, apprentices, or adults at risk must:

Prioritise welfare: Take all reasonable steps to safeguard the health, safety, and wellbeing of young people and vulnerable adults, and ensure all activities are age-appropriate, taking account of participants' maturity, ability, and individual needs.

Maintain professional conduct: Uphold the highest standards of personal behaviour, appearance, and professionalism at all times, and use appropriate language, gestures, and conduct to foster a safe and respectful environment.

Minimise risk in one-to-one situations: Avoid being alone with young people or vulnerable adults, including in cars or in private meetings. Where individual interactions are necessary, ensure they are conducted openly and approved and overseen by another responsible person.

Reporting Concerns – Any concerns about abuse, neglect, or breaches of this policy must be reported immediately in line with our safeguarding procedures.

9. Working in schools and settings

BPN representatives must always follow the established procedures of the school, setting, or site they are visiting. These locations are responsible for implementing their own visitor and on-site worker protocols.

10. Ongoing training

All staff receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety. This covers expectations, roles, and responsibilities relating to filtering and monitoring, with training provided at induction.

BPN ensures that:

- All employees complete annual online safeguarding training as part of BPN's Essential training.
- This policy is regularly reinforced through employee briefings, line management communications, and training sessions for associate facilitators and consultants.
- BPN's Essential training include: Sexual Harassment (LC0014); Cyber Security (LC002); Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (LC007); GDPR (LC001); Health & Safety (LC003); Modern Slavery & Trafficking (LC005); Prevent Duty (LC008); Safeguarding: Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).
- The Designated Safeguarding Team (DSOs) delivers tailored update training to BPN associates, coordinated with each programme team. Additionally, the policy is promoted through newsletters and internal communications, whole-company briefings, and emails from the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs).

11. Responding to people who have experienced abuse or a Safeguarding concern

Best Practice Network acknowledges its responsibility to act on all reports or suspicions of abuse or neglect. Such concerns will be promptly reviewed and securely recorded using our safeguarding platform, My Concern, to ensure consistent monitoring, follow-up, and compliance with safeguarding procedures.

To strengthen safeguarding practice further, we analyse trends through monthly reports generated by My Concern. These insights inform targeted training and continuous improvement in safeguarding across the organisation.

How employees should respond to a disclosure or allegation of abuse:

Immediate Actions:

- Stay Calm – Maintain a composed and professional demeanour.
- Listen Actively – Allow the individual to speak without interruption.
- Do Not Promise Confidentiality – Explain sensitively that you may need to involve safeguarding professionals in order to support them.
- Let Them Lead the Conversation – Avoid pressing for details; allow them to share at their own pace.
- Ask Neutral Questions – Use open questions ("Can you tell me more?") and avoid leading language.
- Reassure Them – Confirm that they have done the right thing by speaking up.

Next Steps:

- Explain the Process – Inform them that you will escalate the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) and that My Concern will be used to record and track the case securely.
- Mention External Support – If required, the Safeguarding Children Partnership (or equivalent safeguarding body) may be consulted.
- Record in My Concern Immediately – Log verbatim details, using the individual's own words wherever possible; include the date, time, location, and names mentioned; and upload any supporting evidence (e.g., photos, messages).
- Report to the DSO – Submit the concern via My Concern and follow up verbally if the matter is urgent.

Confidentiality & Caution:

- Only share on a need-to-know basis – Discuss the matter only with the DSO or safeguarding team.
- Do NOT investigate – This must be left to trained professionals.

If Abuse Is Witnessed or Has Just Occurred:

- The DSO will review the My Concern record and initiate an appropriate response.
- The DSO will update the case log with actions taken (all entries are auditable and password-protected).

Possible Pathways:

- Police Involvement – If a crime is suspected.
- Social Services Referral – For welfare concerns.
- Internal Disciplinary Action – Led by BPN/employer.

12. Managing allegations against an employee

Best Practice Network is committed to handling allegations against employees promptly, fairly, and with strict confidentiality. The following procedures apply:

1. **Initial Response** – All allegations will be considered swiftly and handled confidentially. If an employee is suspected of committing a criminal offence, the police will be informed without delay, particularly where an offence has been witnessed.
2. **Support for Vulnerable Individuals** – Where a child, learner, or vulnerable adult makes an allegation, arrangements will be made to ensure that they can share their concerns safely and without pressure.
3. **Employee Status During Investigation** – Depending on the nature of the allegation, the employee may be suspended or temporarily reassigned to other duties while the investigation is ongoing.
4. **Whistleblowing Protection** – Employees are encouraged to raise concerns through our Whistleblowing Policy, which is clearly communicated to all staff. Those reporting concerns in good faith will receive full support and protection under this policy.

13. Managing an allegation against a third-party supplier e.g. Facilitator or Instructor

Best Practice Network is committed to handling all allegations against third-party suppliers promptly, fairly, and with strict confidentiality. The following steps outline our process:

1. **Initial Response & Notification** – Allegations will be addressed swiftly and confidentially. The third-party supplier will be informed of the allegation, and an investigation will begin.
2. **Legal & Police Involvement** – If the allegation suggests a criminal offence, the Police will be notified immediately. If a crime is witnessed, emergency services should be contacted without delay.
3. **Support for the Reporter (Young Person or Vulnerable Adult)** – The wishes and feelings of the individual making the allegation will be respected. A safe and supportive environment will be provided to ensure they can express their views without fear.
4. **Third-Party Investigation Oversight** – Best Practice Network will request evidence that a full and impartial investigation is being conducted by the third-party supplier. We will monitor progress to ensure accountability.
5. **Corrective Action & Assurance** – Best Practice Network will verify that appropriate corrective actions have been implemented to prevent recurrence. If necessary, we will terminate the partnership if the third party fails to meet safeguarding standards.

14. Keeping learners safe

We are committed to ensuring a safe, respectful, and supportive environment for all learners. To achieve this, we will:

- Promote Respect and Inclusion: Maintain a learning environment free from harassment, discrimination, or abuse, where everyone is treated with dignity and courtesy.

- Collaborate for Safety: Work in partnership with learners, employers, and external agencies to foster a culture of safety, health, and wellbeing.
- Protect Vulnerable Learners: Proactively identify and support learners who may be at risk of abuse, neglect, or radicalisation, ensuring timely intervention.
- Train and Empower Staff: Ensure all employees and associates receive training on safeguarding best practice, including recognising signs of abuse, neglect, or behavioural changes that may indicate harm; understanding factors that increase learner vulnerability; and following clear reporting procedures (see Section 15 and appendices).
- Promote Learner Wellbeing: Educate learners about personal health, safety (including online safety), and resilience so that they can make informed decisions.
- Combat Radicalisation: Raise awareness of the risks associated with extremism and terrorism, equipping learners and staff to recognise and respond to concerns about radicalisation.
- Provide Confidential Support: Offer learners and employers access to designated safeguarding leads for confidential advice, guidance, and referral to specialist agencies where required.
- Conduct Regular Safeguarding Check-Ins: Hold monthly confidential reviews with tutors, incorporating safeguarding and Prevent-related questions; explicitly ask learners, “Do you feel safe?” and provide support in line with this policy; and integrate safeguarding education into induction and ongoing training.
- Build Resilience: Through tutoring and training, empower learners to make safe, informed choices that help protect them from exploitation and abuse.

Digital Safeguarding and Online Safety

Definition and Commitment

Digital safeguarding means protecting individuals from harm in the online environment through:

- Technical measures (e.g., filtering and monitoring).
- Guidance and support (e.g., training and reporting mechanisms).
- Clear procedures for incident response.

Best Practice Network (BPN) is committed to safeguarding all learners, employees, and users of our digital services in line with:

- The Children Act 2004 (duty to promote welfare).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025 (statutory guidance for schools and colleges).
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) & Data Protection Act 2018 (secure handling of personal data).
- The Online Safety Act 2023 (duties on tech services to protect users from illegal and harmful content).
- We apply the same safeguarding principles to online and offline activity.

Key Online Risks

We protect our community from harms including:

- Cyberbullying & harassment (Malicious Communications Act 1988).
- Sexual exploitation & grooming (Sexual Offences Act 2003).
- Discrimination & hate speech (Equality Act 2010).
- Sharing illegal content (e.g., child sexual abuse material – Protection of Children Act 1978).
- Impersonation, hacking & fraud (Computer Misuse Act 1990).
- Misinformation, disinformation & radicalisation (Prevent Duty, Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015).

Four Categories of Online Risk

Risk Area	Examples	Legal/Best Practice Reference
Content	Pornography, self-harm, extremism	Online Safety Act 2023 (duty to tackle illegal content and safety risks)
Contact	Grooming, scams, peer pressure	KCSIE 2025 (education on relationships, online safety, and safeguarding)
Conduct	Cyberbullying, nude image sharing	Revenge Porn Helpline / StopNCII support for image-based abuse
Commerce	Phishing, gambling, fraud	FCA scams guidance

Report phishing/scams to the National Cyber Security Centre and Action Fraud.

Best Practices in Digital Safeguarding

- Regular staff training on evolving online threats, aligned with KCSIE.
- Age-appropriate education for learners on privacy, critical thinking, safer online behaviour, and reporting concerns.
- Secure systems (GDPR-compliant data storage and encrypted communications).
- Clear reporting pathways (DSL contact always available).
- Partnership working with recognised specialist organisations (e.g., UK Safer Internet Centre, NSPCC).

Roles & Responsibilities

- All users must comply with our IT Acceptable Use Policy.
- Employees/Associates must report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- The IT Manager monitors usage and implements security controls.
- Apprentices receive mandatory online safety training (Day 1 plus refreshers).

Note: Even though BPN does not provide internet access in all circumstances, users must follow this policy when engaging with BPN systems (e.g., email, VLEs, online platforms, and loan devices).

Further Support

- [Internet Watch Foundation \(IWF\)](#)
- [YoungMinds](#)
- [BPN Digital Safeguarding Policy](#)

Filtering and Monitoring

- Best Practice Network (BPN) complies with statutory safeguarding requirements, including:
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025 (Part 1, Annex B and online safety expectations, including filtering and monitoring).
- Prevent Duty guidance (England and Wales) – requiring providers to assess risk and respond proportionately, including the risk of access to extremist material.
- UK GDPR & Data Protection Act 2018 – balancing privacy with safeguarding and security requirements.
- Ofsted’s online safety expectations – supporting a whole-organisation approach.

Our Safeguarding Measures

1. **Technology & Tools** – Lightspeed Filter & Alert is deployed on all BPN loan devices, providing AI-driven content blocking aligned with recognised filtering standards, real-time alerts for high-risk searches (e.g., self-harm, radicalisation), and customisable filtering policies by user/group (e.g., staff vs. students).
2. **Monitoring Protocols** – The DSL reviews Lightspeed analytics monthly to identify trends or breaches. Search alarms (e.g., violent or sexualised terms) trigger DSL notification within 24 hours, follow-up with the individual and safeguarding team, and escalation to LADO/children’s services if required (Working Together 2023).
3. **Staff & Student Roles** – The IT Team maintains Lightspeed systems and associated security controls. The DSL leads monthly reviews, updating policies in response to emerging risks (e.g., AI misuse, extremist content, online grooming). Students contribute to annual policy reviews through surveys, in line with participation principles.
4. **Annual Compliance** – Lightspeed systems are audited against recognised filtering and monitoring standards. Prevent Duty risk assessments are refreshed at least annually, and sooner where emerging risk requires it.

Governance: The Advisory Board reviews termly reports to ensure strategic alignment with KCSIE and broader safeguarding requirements.

Sexual Harassment

Best Practice Network maintains a zero-tolerance stance towards sexual harassment, which includes, but is not limited to:

- Indecent exposure
- Unwanted sexual remarks, teasing, or innuendo
- Inappropriate staring, touching, or physical advances
- Taking or distributing sexual photographs without consent
- Forced exposure to pornography
- Being made to witness sexual acts against one’s will
- Any form of sexual coercion, assault, or rapeⁱ

We recognise that victims, particularly children, young people, and vulnerable adults, may find it difficult to disclose abuse verbally. Therefore, all staff, associates, and representatives of Best Practice Network must remain vigilant for potential signs of abuse or harassment and act promptly by reporting concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Leads (see Section 15).

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Peer on Peer abuse

At Best Practice Network (BPN), we maintain a zero-tolerance stance towards peer-on-peer abuse. We understand that the absence of reported incidents does not mean such abuse is not occurring within our programmes.

All employees and associates are trained to recognise and respond appropriately to peer-on-peer abuse. It must never be dismissed as “banter” or “just having a laugh”, as tolerating such behaviour risks normalising harmful conduct.

Any allegations of peer-on-peer abuse will be recorded systematically, investigated thoroughly by the Designated Safeguarding Leads, and addressed through appropriate action. Where necessary, we will work with external agencies, including the police, to ensure a robust response.

SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability)

Best Practice Network recognises that learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) may face disproportionate challenges, including bullying that may go unnoticed and barriers to communication.

We are committed to ensuring their safety and wellbeing. If you have any concerns about a learner, these must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Leads without delay.

Care Leavers

At Best Practice Network (BPN), we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for Care Leavers (aged 16–25) in adult learning and apprenticeships. Recognising their potential vulnerabilities, including housing instability, financial hardship, and mental health challenges, we implement trauma-informed practices and tailored safeguarding measures to support their wellbeing and success.

Key Points of the Policy:

- Identification & Support
- Safeguarding & Wellbeing
- Housing & Practical Assistance
- Progression & Employability
- Staff Training & Awareness
- Partnerships & Monitoring
- Reporting & Confidentiality

Our Care Leavers policy is available on our website <https://www.bestpracticenet.co.uk/our-policies>

15. What to do if you are worried a child, young person or vulnerable adult is at risk

Detailed Guidance

Emergencies

If a child is at immediate risk of harm:

- Call 999 (Police) or 111 (NHS).
- Non-Urgent Safeguarding Concerns
- Report to Best Practice Network's Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO):
- Email: safeguarding@bestpracticenet.co.uk
- Online: BPN Safeguarding Page

If in a school/setting:

- Inform the manager on-site and notify BPN's DSO the same day.

Escalation Pathways

If concerns persist or are not addressed:

- Local Authority Child Protection Team – Use your local council's reporting portal.
- NSPCC Helpline – 0808 800 5000 | help@nspcc.org.uk | Text 88858.
- Mandatory Reporting: FGM
- Under Keeping Children Safe in Education, teachers must report to the police known cases of FGM in girls under 18 without delay.

Legal Duty

Under Section 5B of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (as amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015), all teachers in England and Wales must report known cases of FGM to the police where:

- A girl under 18 has disclosed FGM.
- You observe physical signs that appear to show that FGM has been carried out.

Key Statutory Guidance:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education – GOV.UK](#)
- [Mandatory Reporting Duty for FGM – Home Office / GOV.UK](#)

Physical Signs	Behavioural Signs	Contextual Risk Factors
Difficulty sitting/standing	Reluctance to undergo medical exams	Family history of FGM
Prolonged absence from school	Anxiety about holidays abroad	Mentions a “special procedure” or “becoming a woman”
Sudden changes in behaviour	Withdrawal or depression	Family from a high-prevalence country (e.g., Somalia, Sudan, Egypt)

Step-by-Step Reporting Process for FGM

- Immediate Action – If the child is in immediate danger, call 999. If there is no emergency but FGM is suspected or known, call the police non-emergency line (101) and submit a report to the BPN DSO within 24 hours.
- What to Report – The child’s name, age, and address (if known); details of the disclosure/evidence; and any protective factors (e.g., sibling also at risk).
- Follow-Up – Document all actions taken (time, date, police reference number), inform the school’s DSL (if in an educational setting), and do not confront the family directly, as this could increase the risk.
- Support for the Child – Refer to the NSPCC FGM Helpline (0800 028 3550) or NHS FGM support services.

Additional Resources

- [Home Office FGM Resource Pack](#)
- [NSPCC FGM Guidance](#)

Staff Support

BPN recognises that staff may also face risk or require support. Contact the DSL or senior leader for advice and support.

Key References

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education – GOV.UK](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children – GOV.UK](#)
- [NSPCC Guidelines – NSPCC Reporting Abuse](#)

Designated Safeguarding Leads

Designated Safeguarding Leads	Phone number	Email address
Chris Garcia	07584310068	chriscarcia@bestpracticenet.co.uk
Sian Marsh	07795683297 (Out of office hours 07799072872)	sianmarsh@bestpracticenet.co.uk
DSO Team	0117 920 9200	safeguarding@bestpracticenet.co.uk

16. Confidentiality and Safeguarding in Work with Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults.

When working with children, young people, or vulnerable adults, it is essential to maintain clear and transparent communication about confidentiality. While professionals and agencies are legally required to protect personal information and will not normally disclose it without consent, the welfare of the individual must take precedence where there are concerns about significant harm. In such circumstances, safeguarding is the priority and appropriate information sharing is necessary.

Key Principles for Practitioners:

- Open Communication from the Start – Discuss confidentiality and safeguarding arrangements at the outset of any engagement. Provide regular reminders so that individuals understand processes and professional responsibilities. Clearly explain the limits of confidentiality before any issue arises.
- Avoid Promising Secrecy – Never guarantee absolute confidentiality. If a child discloses abuse, explain sensitively that you must share the information in order to help keep them safe.
- Responsible Information Sharing – If sharing confidential information becomes necessary, explain the reasons to the individual in an age-appropriate and accessible way. Seek their cooperation where possible and keep them informed about the next steps.
- Support and Guidance – Provide clear explanations of why information must be shared, what process will follow, who will be involved, and how they can access support.
- By building trust through transparency, professionals can balance confidentiality with the overriding duty to safeguard vulnerable individuals.

17. Recording and managing confidential information

Best Practice Network is committed to maintaining confidentiality wherever possible. Information relating to safeguarding concerns will be shared only with relevant parties on a strict need-to-know basis.

All records will be stored securely in accordance with UK data protection legislation, including the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

All staff and partners must adhere to this protocol, ensuring alignment with organisational safeguarding procedures and statutory duties.

18. The Prevent Duty Guidance 2023

BPN's Prevent Commitment in Education

Key Responsibility	Education-Specific Actions
Policy & Compliance	Regularly reviewing and updating our Prevent arrangements in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), and the current Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales.
Staff Training	Mandatory Prevent awareness training for all staff, with enhanced training for DSLs and relevant safeguarding staff. Annual refreshers include education-sector case studies, online harms, and local risk themes.
Curriculum Integration	Promoting British Values, critical thinking, respectful debate, digital resilience, and

Key Responsibility	Education-Specific Actions
	awareness of manipulative extremist narratives through teaching materials, tutorials, reviews, and pastoral support.
Threat Monitoring	Regular review of local and national Prevent trends and risks at safeguarding meetings, using relevant Home Office, local authority, police, DfE, and safeguarding partnership updates.
Reporting & Referrals	Clear procedures for escalating concerns to the DSL and, where appropriate, onward referral to Prevent/Channel for multi-agency support.

Education-Specific Prevent Practices (2026)

1. Risk Assessment and Local Threat Awareness

- At safeguarding meetings, DSLs review local Prevent themes and referral trends.
- DSLs review online risks, including extremist content, conspiracy narratives, algorithmic amplification, and grooming through social media, gaming, and messaging platforms.
- DSLs review learner vulnerabilities, including bullying, isolation, grievance, mental health needs, hate incidents, and exposure to harmful ideology.
- BPN will maintain a proportionate Prevent risk assessment that is reviewed regularly and updated when emerging risks or changes in delivery require it.

2. Embedding Prevent in Safeguarding, Reviews, and Curriculum

- Staff and associates should use learner reviews, tutorials, and other appropriate opportunities to promote critical thinking and media literacy, support online safety and resilience to extremist narratives, encourage respectful challenge, democratic participation, and mutual respect, and reinforce that safeguarding includes being alert to radicalisation as a form of harm.

3. Staff Vigilance

- Training includes how to identify potential indicators, which may include sudden or concerning changes in behaviour, language, presentation, or peer group; fixation on violence, grievance, or extremist ideology; use of extremist, dehumanising, or hateful language in discussion, written work, or online activity; and repeated access to extremist content or attempts to bypass filtering and monitoring controls.
- Concerns must be recorded and reported in line with safeguarding procedures. Staff must not investigate concerns themselves.ⁱⁱ

4. Online Safety and Prevent

- BPN recognises that radicalisation can take place online as well as offline.
- Digital safeguarding measures, including filtering, monitoring, staff vigilance, safer use of devices, and learner education, form part of our Prevent response.
- Where devices, platforms, or BPN systems are used, any concerning online behaviour may be reviewed in line with safeguarding, IT, and data protection requirements.

5. Referral and Multi-Agency Working

- If a concern arises, staff must record the concern factually and without delay, report it immediately to the DSL/DSO through internal safeguarding routes, and allow the DSL to assess risk, seek advice where needed, and determine whether a referral to Prevent, Channel, children's social care, adult safeguarding, or the police is appropriate.

- Channel is a multi-agency process designed to support individuals who may be susceptible to being drawn into terrorism. It is a safeguarding process, not a criminal sanction.

6. Learner Support and Safeguarding Context

- BPN recognises that vulnerability to radicalisation may sit alongside other safeguarding concerns, including mental health issues, exploitation, bullying, trauma, discrimination, social isolation, or harmful online influence.
- Prevent concerns must therefore be considered within the wider safeguarding context and responded to proportionately, lawfully, and sensitively.

7. Governance, Quality Assurance, and Review

- Prevent training completion, referral patterns, emerging themes, and risk assessment activity will be reviewed through safeguarding governance arrangements.
- The Advisory Board and senior leaders will receive appropriate oversight information to ensure compliance, accountability, and continuous improvement.

Key Definitions

Term	Definition	Relevance to Schools/Training Providers
Channel	A multi-agency safeguarding process that assesses referrals and, where appropriate, provides tailored support to individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism.	Education providers may refer vulnerable learners for support, mentoring, or other early intervention.
Radicalisation	The process by which a person comes to support terrorism or extremist ideologies associated with terrorism.	Staff should understand that radicalisation is a safeguarding concern and should be reported in the same way as other forms of harm.
Extremism	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.	Extremist narratives may present online, in peer groups, in written work, or in wider learner behaviour.
Online Grooming	Extremists or harmful actors targeting children or adults through gaming, social media, forums, or messaging platforms.	Staff must follow online safety procedures and report concerns promptly.
Far-Right Extremism	Hate-based ideology promoting racial, religious, or other forms of prejudice and violence.	A continuing safeguarding risk that may affect learners and staff and must be addressed

Term	Definition	Relevance to Schools/Training Providers
		through inclusive practice and vigilance.

Reporting

- Staff observe or receive a concern (e.g., extremist views expressed in class, concerning online activity, or attempts to access harmful material).
- Immediate referral to DSL/DSO using internal safeguarding reporting procedures.
- DSL assesses the concern, considers context, vulnerability, and immediate risk, and seeks advice or escalates to Prevent/Channel/Police where appropriate.
- Outcomes are reviewed through safeguarding processes and actions are updated as needed.

Emergency Contacts:

- Anti-Terrorist Hotline: 0800 789 321

Useful Prevent Links

- [Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales \(GOV.UK\)](#)
- [Channel Duty Guidance \(GOV.UK\)](#)
- [Educate Against Hate](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(GOV.UK\)](#)
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(GOV.UK\)](#)

19. Modern Slavery in the UK (2025): Know the Signs & Take Action

What is Modern Slavery? Modern slavery is the illegal exploitation of people for profit through coercion, violence, or deception. Exploitation continues to occur in hidden supply chains, unregulated labour, criminal exploitation, domestic servitude, sexual exploitation, and increasingly through online recruitment and control.

Who is at Risk in the UK? Victims can be of any age, gender, or nationality. Risks include migrant workers in construction, car washes, nail bars, hospitality, agriculture, warehousing, or supply chains; care workers or domestic workers tied to exploitative employers; children forced into county lines drug trafficking or online sexual exploitation; and homeless or otherwise vulnerable individuals coerced into criminal or labour exploitation.

Key Signs – Modern slavery is often hidden in plain sight. Look for physical signs such as injuries, malnourishment, untreated health needs, or inappropriate clothing for the weather; behavioural signs such as fear, withdrawal, or rehearsed responses; work conditions involving excessive hours, restricted freedom, no contract, withheld wages, or pay below legal requirements; living conditions involving overcrowded accommodation, restricted movement, withheld identity documents, or signs of control; and digital control such as lack of access to a personal phone or monitored communications.

Type	UK-Specific Risks
Human Trafficking	Victims moved for exploitation through deception, coercion, or abuse of vulnerability.
Forced Labour	Exploitation in low-paid sectors, informal work, or hidden labour settings.
Sexual Exploitation	Coercion into sexual activity, including online-facilitated abuse.

Type	UK-Specific Risks
Criminal Exploitation	Forced involvement in county lines, theft, fraud, cannabis cultivation, or benefit abuse.
Domestic Servitude	Victims hidden in private households and isolated from support.

How to Report

The UK Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline is available on 08000 121 700.

- Report concerns to the Modern Slavery & Exploitation Helpline.
- If someone is in immediate danger, call 999.
- Refer safeguarding concerns internally through BPN safeguarding procedures.
- Use GOV.UK and official reporting routes where employer or organisational compliance concerns arise.

Why This Matters

Modern slavery remains a serious safeguarding issue. Early identification, professional curiosity, and timely reporting are essential to protecting victims and preventing further harm.

Reference Terms

A. The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) – Guidance on DBS checks for employers.

B. Legal Framework – This policy aligns with UK legislation and guidance designed to safeguard children, including: Children Act 1989; United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1991; Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR; Human Rights Act 1998; Sexual Offences Act 2003; Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003; Children Act 2004; Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006; Children and Families Act 2014; Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Code of Practice (0-25) 2014; Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015; Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025); Prevent Duty Guidance: England and Wales; and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023).

C. Context – Child protection is an integral part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. It refers to action taken to protect children who are suffering, or are likely to suffer, significant harm. This policy applies to all individuals under 18 years of age, hereafter referred to as children.

As outlined in the DfE’s Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023), safeguarding encompasses protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment to health or development, ensuring safe and effective care, enabling positive outcomes for all children, and adhering to Prevent Duty requirements under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025) sets out safeguarding duties for schools and colleges, including relevant expectations for training providers working with children and young people.

We uphold the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, affirming that all children have the right to protection; children’s views must be heard and respected; interventions must be child-centred; safeguarding requires multi-agency collaboration; and professionals must consider race, gender, disability, culture, sexuality, and age in safeguarding responses.

D. Definitions of Abuse – Abuse involves maltreatment through harmful acts or through failure to act to prevent harm. It can occur in families, institutions, or communities, including online, and may be perpetrated by adults or by other children.

1. Physical Abuse – Includes hitting, shaking, poisoning, burning, or fabricated illness. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is a form of gender-based violence that must be addressed under safeguarding procedures.

2. Emotional Abuse – Persistent emotional harm, such as belittling, silencing, rejection, humiliation, or bullying (including cyberbullying). It may involve exposure to domestic abuse or developmentally inappropriate expectations.
3. Sexual Abuse – Involves coercing or forcing a child into sexual activities, whether contact (e.g., rape or assault) or non-contact (e.g., grooming, indecent imagery, or online abuse). Abuse can occur online or offline and is not limited by gender or age.
4. Neglect – Persistent failure to meet basic needs, including lack of food, shelter, or medical care; exposure to harm or inadequate supervision; and failure to respond to emotional needs.
5. Abuse and Children with Disabilities – Disabled children may face increased risk due to communication barriers, dependence on multiple carers, and social isolation or intimidation. Safeguarding responses must never accept lower standards of care or protection for disabled children.

E. Safeguarding Issues – Staff must recognise risks such as child-on-child abuse (bullying, sexual harassment, upskirting, hazing), drug/alcohol misuse, serious violence (e.g., county lines), radicalisation, and sharing of nude imagery (sexting). Key principles: never dismiss harmful behaviour as “banter” or “normal”; and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

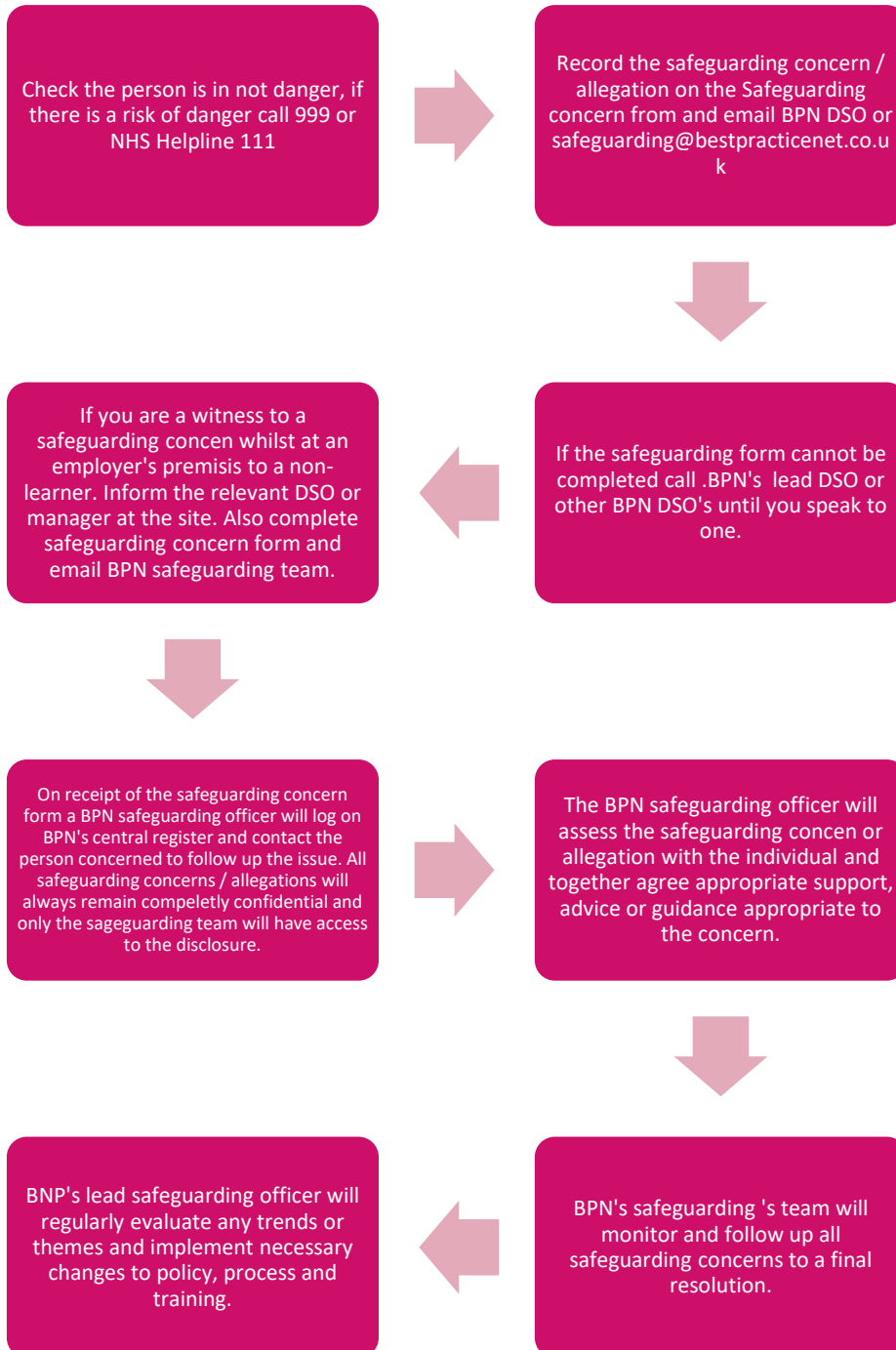
F. Exploitation and Harm – 1. Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE): includes forced involvement in drug trafficking, theft, or violence. Victims may appear complicit but are legally recognised as exploited. 2. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE): involves coercion into sexual acts, including in relation to 16–17-year-olds who can legally consent. Perpetrators may use grooming, manipulation, or blackmail. 3. Domestic Abuse: encompasses psychological, physical, sexual, emotional, or financial abuse. Children may be direct victims or witnesses, which can significantly affect their wellbeing and education. 4. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): teachers must report known cases of FGM in under-18s to the police. 5. Mental Health Concerns: mental health needs may indicate underlying abuse, neglect, exploitation, or other safeguarding concerns. Staff should follow safeguarding procedures and consult the DSL. 6. Serious Violence: warning signs include unexplained absences/injuries, association with older individuals, and possession of expensive gifts.

Appendices

Appendices to be inserted or updated in line with the wider policy pack, retaining the structure of the original policy document.

Appendices

Reporting Procedure



Safeguarding Concern Form

<https://www.bestpracticenet.co.uk/safeguarding>