

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

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Owner and version control

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

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that we recruit and work in a way that is consistent with child protection and safeguarding, that we promote child protection and safeguarding and that we are clear about how to respond to any issues we identify that may place a child at risk. This policy highlights the potential risks of modern slavery and human trafficking, including how to identify signs of exploitation and how to report concerns.

2. Scope

The Policy relates to all members of the Best Practice Network Senior Leadership Team, employees, associates, facilitators, mentors, learners, and individuals supplying services and volunteers.

This policy covers all programmes delivered by Best Practice Network to its apprentices, trainees and candidates, including those working directly with children.

It is a requirement that all the above read and sign that they have accepted this Policy before undertaking work with Best Practice Network.

3. Overview of our Policy

Best Practice Network is fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all children, young people, apprentices and vulnerable adults, and demonstrates this by taking all reasonable steps to protect them from physical, sexual, or emotional abuse or neglect.

We will:

- Provide a safe environment for children, young people, apprentices and vulnerable adults to learn in
- Identify children, young people, apprentices and vulnerable adults who are suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm
- Take appropriate action to see that such children, young people, apprentices and vulnerable adults are kept safe

Our Policy is to recruit all staff safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made on every employee regardless of role. We require suppliers and associates to comply with our policy and procedures, and to provide effective supervision, support, training and quality assurance measures.

We work in numerous schools and settings and so it is essential that our staff and associates have the requisite checks, knowledge and skills to carry out their jobs safely and effectively.

Best Practice Network defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as:

- Protecting children and vulnerable adults from maltreatment
- Protecting children and vulnerable adults from peer-on-peer abuse
- Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of learners when adults, young people and apprentices are using the internet, social media, or mobile devices
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Undertaking that role to enable those children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully

4. Commitment to the Policy

Best Practice Network has a responsibility to work with others to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

We ensure that all staff, including freelance, contracted staff and/or associates are aware of the requirements within this policy and their commitment to it. Commitment statements are included as part of contracts of employment or freelance work for Best Practice Network.

We update our staff and associates as to effective safeguarding practice through updates to training, newsletters and briefings.

All candidates, trainees or apprentices enrolled on BPN programmes are provided with a copy of this policy in their relevant programme handbooks. This policy forms part of the induction process. Specifically on the apprenticeship programmes, it is referred to during monthly reviews with learners.

5. Recruitment of employees

BPN Recruitment Policy and Procedure should always be followed.

- BPN adheres to safer recruitment guidance, with the requirement that all interviewers are fully trained and understand the safer recruitment process.
- All new starters must complete the DBS process.
- All new starters must be briefed on this safeguarding policy and undertake child protection / safeguarding training online and in-house prevent training within the first month of employment as part of induction

- It is the responsibility of both the line manager and of HR to ensure that this occurs and that a log is kept to evidence this

6. Recruitment of employees and associates

- Every new associate must agree to a contract specifying that they comply with BPN Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and have undertaken safeguarding / child protection and Prevent Duty training
- They will be sent these documents by HR as part of the 'on-boarding' process and updates will be communicated to all associates annually
- Any individual working under contract to BPN, must provide BPN in advance with Date of Birth, DBS registration number and date, and where available proof of registration to the DBS update service
- It is the responsibility of both the line manager and of HR to ensure that this occurs and that a log is kept to evidence this

7. Ongoing responsibility for employees and associates

- BPN managers may not deploy staff or associates to do work on BPN's behalf without the checks and induction described above being completed
- On an annual basis, or when specific new legislation or requirements arise, BPN Safeguarding Team will run a briefing session for employees, circulating the briefing to any non-attenders
- It is the responsibility of the line manager/commissioner/contractor to ensure that Safeguarding is included as a standard item on updates and ongoing training to staff and to work with HR to ensure that the appropriate actions are carried out
- On an annual basis all employees and associates are required to complete an ongoing suitability declaration. For employees a copy of the declaration will be stored on the online HR system. Associate declarations will be stored on the associate dashboard.

8. Employee good practice

Best Practice Network recognises that it has a duty to act on reports, or suspicions of abuse or neglect.

Those that deal with children, young people, apprentices or adults at risk must:

- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of any young person or adult at risk
- Ensure that any activities are appropriate to the age, maturity and ability of those participating
- Consistently display high standards of personal behaviour and appearance
- Ensure behaviour, language, gestures etc. are appropriate and professional
- Avoid spending time alone with young people or vulnerable adults at risk including car journeys. Meetings with individuals should ideally not take place alone, they must be as open as possible and must be in full knowledge of another responsible person

9. Working in schools and settings

Representatives of BPN should always ensure they comply with the procedures in place at the school, setting or other site being visited, which will be under its own obligations to have arrangements in place for visitors and those working on site. When working in early years settings BPN employees will wear company branded uniform.

10. Ongoing training

BPN will ensure that all employees are given annual online safeguarding training and that this policy is communicated regularly at staff briefings and in communications through the line management structure as well as at briefings and training days for associate facilitators, consultants etc. Charles Bedingfield (DSL) provides appropriate update training to BPN associates as agreed with each programme team. This policy is promoted through newsletters, internal communication, whole company briefings and emails from the DSLs.

11. Responding to people who have experienced abuse

Best Practice Network recognises that it has a duty to act on reports, or suspicions of abuse or neglect, to investigate these concerns and ensure they are logged on the secure Safeguarding and Well-being log.

How employees should respond if they receive an allegation*:

- Reassure the person concerned
- Listen to what they are saying
- Record what you have been told/witnessed as soon as possible
- Remain calm and do not show shock or disbelief
- Tell them that the information will be treated seriously
- Do not start to investigate, make a judgement or ask detailed or probing questions
- Do not promise to keep it a secret

If an employee witnesses abuse, or abuse has just taken place, the priorities will be:

- To call an ambulance if required
- To call the Police if a crime has been committed
- To preserve evidence
- To keep yourself and others safe
- To inform the Designated Safeguarding officer

The Designated Safeguarding Officers will initiate an investigation as appropriate maintaining confidential records held securely within the password protected log.

*To raise and record concerns please refer to the guidance at point 15 below.

12. Managing an allegation against a member of staff

- Best Practice Network will ensure that any allegations made against an employee will be dealt with swiftly and confidentially
- Where an employee is thought to have committed a criminal offence the Police will be informed. If a crime has been witnessed the Police should be contacted immediately
- Where a young person or vulnerable adult has made an allegation against a member of staff their wishes and feelings will be taken into account to enable them to safely express their views
- The employee will likely be suspended or asked to conduct other duties whilst an investigation takes place
- Best Practice Network has a whistleblowing procedure and employees are aware of this policy. Employees will be supported to use this policy

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

- Best Practice Network will ensure that any allegations are dealt with swiftly and confidentially
- Best Practice Network will inform the third party of the allegation and begin an investigation
- Where an individual is thought to have committed a criminal offence the Police will be informed. If a crime has been witnessed the Police should be contacted immediately
- Where a young person or vulnerable adult has made an allegation against a third-party supplier their wishes and feelings will be taken into account to enable them to safely express their views
- Best Practice Network will seek evidence and assurance that a full investigation is being completed by the third-party
- Best Practice Network will seek evidence that corrective action has been implemented

14. Keeping learners safe

We will ensure that:

- All people will be treated with respect and with courtesy in an environment that is free from harassment or discrimination.
- We work in partnership with learners, employers and other agencies to promote a safe and healthy culture
- Partnerships proactively protect learners at risk of abuse, neglect or at risk of radicalisation.

- Staff/associates will be trained and have a clear understanding of personal safety and good safeguarding practices as well as what factors may make learners vulnerable to a range of safeguarding concerns and can recognise outward signs of abuse, or unexplained changes in behaviour or performance which may be indicative of abuse. All staff/associates will be made aware of the signs of abuse and the procedures for reporting abuse. (see section 15 and the appendices)
- We work with learners to promote their own personal health, well-being and safety including their safety online.
- Proactively to raise awareness of radicalisation and extremism in order to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.
- Learners and employers will be contacted by the Designated Safeguarding Leads and will receive confidential advice, guidance and support for a range of issues that they may face. They will be signposted to external agencies where specialist support is required.
- Apprentices take part in monthly confidential review meetings with tutors where they are asked specific safeguarding and Prevent questions. Furthermore, they are asked if they feel safe. Tutors are trained to give support and guidance in line with the policy. Safeguarding teaching is a fundamental part of the induction process.
- Through training and tutoring we support learners to have personal resilience and be able to make informed and sensible decisions about their safety and well-being in an attempt to prevent them from being exploited and or abused.

Online Learning

Best Practice Network recognises that online technology is invaluable for enabling children, young people and adults to continue their learning, keep in touch with friends and feel connected with the outside world. But changes in online behaviour can put young people and apprentices at risk of online abuse. In many cases abuse will take place concurrently via online channels and in daily life. Children, young people and vulnerable adults can also abuse their peers online, this can take the form of abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages, the non-consensual sharing of indecent images, especially around chat groups, and the sharing of abusive images to those who do not want to receive such content.

Where employees or associates are concerned about the online safety of learners, they should always speak to the designated safeguarding leads. All staff, associates and learners accessing BPN programmes must adhere to our IT policy for safe usage. The IT Manager at BPN is responsible for monitoring the use of IT across the business. Although BPN does not provide internet access to participants of our programmes, all participants are expected to comply with this policy in their use of any BPN systems such as email or virtual learning environments. All participants are expected to adhere to the appropriate use section of the Internet, Email and Mobile Communication Policy in all interactions with BPN and other participants.

On the apprenticeship programmes the first day of learning, additional webinars and reviews are used to promote and support knowledge of online safety to apprentices and staff.

Sexual Harassment

Best Practice Network recognises that sexual harassment includes indecent exposure, sexual harassment, inappropriate looking or touching, as well as rape. Sexual teasing or innuendo, sexual photography, subsection to pornography, witnessing sexual acts, and sexual acts that the person does not agree to or were pressured into consenting to. Staff and associates should recognise that children, young people and vulnerable adults might not find it easy to talk about their abuse verbally. Everyone working on behalf of Best Practice Network should be aware of signs and behaviours that might indicate abuse and report this to the Designated Safeguarding Leads (See point 15 below).

Peer on Peer abuse

At Best Practice Network there is a zero-tolerance approach to peer-on-peer abuse. We recognise that even if there are no reported cases of peer-on-peer abuse, this doesn't mean it's not happening within the programmes BPN delivers. Staff and associates are aware of the importance of never tolerating or dismissing peer-on-peer abuse as "banter" or "just having a laugh"; and are aware that dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them. Allegations of peer-on-peer abuse will be recorded, investigated and dealt with by the Designated Safeguarding Leads. Where appropriate, we liaise with other agencies (including the police) after an allegation has been made.

SEND

Best Practice Network acknowledges learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities can be disproportionately affected by problems such as bullying (without showing any outward signs) and they may have communication barriers and difficulties in overcoming them. Any concerns regarding a learner should be raised with the Designated Safeguarding Leads immediately.

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

- In the case of an emergency where you consider that a child is in immediate danger call the police on 999.
- In the event of a situation in which you consider a child is at risk, you should contact the Best Practice Network designated Child Protection/Safeguarding Officer: safeguarding@bestpracticenet.co.uk

The Designated Safeguarding Officers are:

- **Sian Marsh: 07795 683297 (out of office hours 07799 072872)**
- **Charles Bedingfield: 0117 4407842 (mobile 07769946822)**
- If you witness something that is of concern when visiting a school or setting, you should inform the setting manager at the time and tell the manager that you intend to pass on your concerns to BPN. You will need to inform us that day that you have referred this concern to the manager.

- Every individual has the right to make a referral to Social Care (particularly if they feel their concerns are not being taken seriously) but we would always advise you to consult with the named people first:
 - Their local authority child protection team - <https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>
 - The NSPCC on 0808 800 5000, email help@nspcc.org.uk or text 88858
 - or
 - In the case of an emergency where you consider that a child is in immediate danger call the police on 999
 - Under paragraph 40 of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021), if a teacher, in the course of their work in the profession, discovers that an act of Female Genital Mutilation appears to have been carried out on a girl under the age of 18, the teacher must report this to the police

Referrals made to the NSPCC and the police are passed on, as appropriate, to local authority child protection teams.

Best Practice Network recognises that persons working for the organisation are themselves vulnerable in their work with children and young people. In such circumstances you should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or an appropriate member of their organisation, as indicated above.

16. Confidentiality

In any work with children, young people or vulnerable adults it is important to be clear about confidentiality. While personal information held by professionals and agencies is subject to a legal duty of confidence and should not normally be disclosed without the subject's consent, when there are concerns that a child is or may be at risk of significant harm, then the over-riding objective must be to safeguard that child, young person or vulnerable adult and disclosure of information is imperative.

Confidentiality and child protection should be discussed with children, young people at the beginning of any piece of work, and reminders and information given from time to time, to ensure that they understand the processes and what responsibilities the staff members have. It is essential to be clear about the limits of confidentiality well before any such matter arises.

- Do not promise to keep secrets. If in the process of your work a child discloses to you that they are being abused, you will need to tell them that you must report it
- Should it become necessary to pass on information shared by another party, this decision should always be explained with them and where possible their co-operation sought beforehand

Explanations of the reasons; the processes; the likely sequence of events; who to contact for information or for support should also be provided.

17. Recording and managing confidential information

Best Practice Network is committed to maintaining confidentiality wherever possible and information around safeguarding issues should be shared only with those who need to know.

Any information that is recorded will be kept secure and will comply with data protection legislation.

18. The Prevent Duty Guidance 2015

The Prevent Strategy is the response to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat from those who promote it; to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support. This strategy is not limited by age; this is reflected through all work completed at Best Practice Network.

Best Practice Network will work to protect and take action to protect all learners from extremist and violent views in the same way that we have undertaken our safeguarding responsibilities.

Under the Prevent Duty Guidance (2015) Best Practice Network has specific responsibilities to ensure:

- Policies and procedures are in place to implement the Prevent Duty
- Leaders and their teams have undertaken training in relation to the Prevent Duty
- Employees and associates exemplify fundamental British values in their work practice
- All employees and associates are aware of when it is appropriate to refer concerns about apprentices, trainees, candidates or colleagues to the Safeguarding Lead

Best Practice Network actively supports the Prevent Duty element of the Government's Counter Terrorism Strategy and, where deemed appropriate, will seek external support through referrals to the appropriate partners regarding any individual or individuals at risk in order to protect them and avoid them becoming radicalised.

Best Practice Network recognises that radicalisation can occur to an individual from any section of society and is not particular to any racial, ethnic or social group. We further recognise that in many instances the process of radicalisation is essentially one of grooming by others.

Staff are signposted to additional free Home Office Prevent Duty training can be completed using this link

[Prevent Awareness Online Training](#)

Definitions

British Values	British values are defined as: 'democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs'. Training Providers are expected to encourage learners to respect other people with particular regard to the recommendations set out in the Equality Act 2010.
Extremism	The UK government has defined extremism in the Prevent Duty as: 'vocal or active opposition to fundamental British values'. The risk is that by allowing extremists to influence young people, more terrorist related incidents will occur and this will place

	members of the public, members of the emergency services and the security forces at greater risk.
Ideology	A set of beliefs.
Radicalisation	The process by which a person comes to support extremism and especially those forms of extremism that lead to terrorism.
Safeguarding	The process of protecting vulnerable individuals.
Terrorism	Violent action taken to promote an extremist ideology, intimidate the public and influence government policy.
Vulnerability	Factors associated with being susceptible to radicalisation.

19. Modern Slavery

Please refer to the BPN Modern Slavery Statement.

Appendices

The Disclosure Barring Service

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/dbs-check-requests-guidance-for-employers>

Legal Framework

This policy has been drawn up on the basis of law and guidance that seeks to protect children, namely;

- Children Act 1989
- United Convention of the Rights of the Child 1991
- Data protection Act 1998
- 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) 0 to 25 2014
- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021

Context

Child protection is a part of safeguarding and promoting welfare. This refers to the activity that is undertaken to protect specific children who are suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm. This document applies to children and young people below the age of eighteen. The term 'children' will be used throughout the policy to apply to children and young people below the age of eighteen.

The DfE's **Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018) PDF (Links to an external site)** defines safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children as:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children's health or development
- Ensuring that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes
- The Prevent Duty Guidance (2015) Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015) should be read in conjunction with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)

The **DfE's Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021)** sets out what schools and colleges must do to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people under the age of 18. The term 'School' includes maintained nursery schools.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/99

We work within the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and believe that:

- All children have the right to be protected
- All children should be listened to and their views taken seriously
- Children's needs should be looked at holistically and should not be defined solely in terms of their abuse
- All interventions must be child-centred
- To effectively protect children, professionals must identify and work with safe and protective adults within children's families and communities
- Professionals need to be aware of how issues of race, gender, disability, culture, sexuality and age impact on an individual's life experiences
- Professionals need to be aware of how issues of race, gender, disability, culture, sexuality and age impact on their understanding of and response to keeping children safe
- Joint working between agencies and disciplines is essential for the protection of children

Definitions of abuse

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child. An individual may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Neglect or abuse, physically, emotionally or sexually, can have major long-term effects on all aspects of a child's health, development and wellbeing. Sustained abuse is likely to have a deep impact on the child's self-image and self-esteem, and on his or her future life.

Harm may occur intentionally or unintentionally. The definitions of harm outlined in **Working Together 2013** are used to determine whether a child needs a child protection plan.

Physical abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness in a child. FGM is a form of violence against women and girls and should be addressed under existing procedures designed to safeguard children and vulnerable adults.

Emotional abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may

include not giving the child opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. These may include interactions that are beyond the child's development capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children.

Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:

- Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment)
 - Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger
 - Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers)
- or
- Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment
 - It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs

Abuse and children with a disability

Evidence available in the UK on the extent of abuse among children with a disability suggests that they are at increased risk of abuse, and that the presence of multiple disabilities appears to increase the risk of both abuse and neglect.

Disability may be defined as:

- A major physical impairment, severe medical illness, and/or a moderate to severe learning disability
- or
- An ongoing high level of dependency on others for personal care and the meeting of other basic needs

Children with a disability may be especially vulnerable to abuse for a number of reasons. Some may:

- Have fewer social contacts with other children
- Receive intimate personal care and other contacts, from a larger number of caregivers
- Have an impaired capacity to challenge abuse
- Have communication difficulties which may make it difficult to tell others what is happening
- Be inhibited about complaining because of a fear of losing services
- Be especially vulnerable to bullying and/or intimidation
- Be more vulnerable than other children to abuse by their peers

Where there are concerns about the welfare of a disabled child, they should be acted upon in accordance with these procedures in the same way as with any other child. The same thresholds for action and the same timescales apply. It would be unacceptable if poor standards of care were tolerated for disabled children that would not be tolerated for nondisabled children.

Serious Violence

Indicators, which may signal children, young people or vulnerable adults are at risk from, or are involved with serious violent crime may include:

- Increased absence from education
- A change in friendships or relationships with older individuals or groups
- A significant decline in performance
- Signs of self-harm or a significant change in wellbeing signs of assault or unexplained injuries.
- Unexplained gifts or new possessions could also indicate that children, young people or vulnerable adults have been approached by, or are involved with, individuals associated with criminal networks or gangs and may be at risk of criminal exploitation