



**VARSITY
TRAINING**

Professional
Health Care Education

Safeguarding Policy, Procedures and Guidance

Updated: July 28th 2022



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Commitment

Varsity Training as a training provider, is committed to safeguarding the interests of children, young people and vulnerable adults. It believes that anyone who participates in any learning activities should be able to take part in an environment that is both safe and enjoyable. Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone including statutory, independent and voluntary agencies as well as every citizen.

Varsity Training will endeavour to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults by:

- valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- maintaining policy, procedures and a code of conduct (where applicable) for staff which adheres to the requirements of the Joint Council for Qualifications
- recruiting staff safely by ensuring all necessary checks are made in line with government guidance and legislation
- updating staff on the policy and procedures and providing access to relevant information
- respecting confidentiality whilst sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know and appropriately involving parents, children, young people and vulnerable adults
- providing effective support and management for staff and representatives
- To create a safe and secure environment for students we will;
- Operate a zero-tolerance approach to weapons, drugs, alcohol and bullying, including cyber or electronic bullying, in all forms.
- Ensure all staff, including volunteers, have appropriate CRB and other checks
- Staff to wear ID Badges at all times

It is the responsibility of Varsity Training to ensure they have a skilled and competent workforce, who are able to take on the roles and responsibilities required to protect learners. Staff are encouraged and supported to attend updates for safeguarding training through e-learning and Somerset Safeguarding children's board/adults and a member of the team are fully up to date with this course. Somerset LSCB (SSCB) recognises the importance of keeping practitioners up to date with the latest research, knowledge and best practice available in child protection. Ensuring that all assessments, communications, documentation, records, materials, personnel deployment, processes and procedures in no way undermine the interests of children, young people and vulnerable adults but actively seek to protect them

Every 3 months Varsity training conduct a learner safety and equality review form, where learners are asked if they understand Varsity's policies and that of their organisations. Learners are asked about their understanding of safeguarding and if they have experienced any form of abuse.

While primarily intended to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults, this safeguarding policy also serves to protect staff from unsubstantiated allegations of improper conduct.

Legal Context

Children and young people

For the purposes of this Policy, the term “children and young people” refers to a child who has not yet reached their eighteenth birthday in England, Wales and N. Ireland and their sixteenth birthday in Scotland.

This Policy is particularly informed by the requirements of the Children Act (1989), which provides a framework for the care and protection of children and young people and the Children Act (2004) which underpins the Every Child Matters: Change for Children. This policy takes into account relevant legislation such as:

- The Children’s Act (Scotland) (1995);
- The Children’s Order (Northern Ireland) 1995;
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- Any relevant guidance and/or amendment to legislation as necessary.

This legislation and associated guidance promotes the well-being of children and young people from birth to 16 (Scotland) and 18 (England, Northern Ireland and Wales). The aim is for every child or young person, whatever their background or circumstances, to have the support they need to achieve their full potential. These government frameworks include an outcome that children and young people should be able to stay safe, live in a safe environment and be protected from harm.

This means that all organisations providing services to children or young people have a responsibility to share information and work together, to protect them from harm and to help them to achieve what they want in life.

Vulnerable adults

For the purposes of this policy the term “vulnerable adult” refers to someone over the age of 18 who

“...is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or serious exploitation.”

- Who Decides” Lord Chancellor’s Department 1997

There is no mandatory legislation or statutory responsibility to report the abuse of vulnerable adults; however the same principles that apply to children should be used to ensure appropriate action is taken to protect vulnerable adults.

Legislation and Regulation

Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, Section 26 and Schedule 4 - Offenders and individuals banned from working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.

Under the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000, it is an offence punishable by imprisonment to apply for work with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults if an individual has been:

- convicted of a Schedule Four Offence² and/or;
- put on the Protection of Children Act List (POCA³) and/or;
- put on the Protection of Vulnerable Adults List (POVA⁴) and/or;
- considered unsuitable or banned from working with children under section 142 of the Education Act of 2002⁵.

If such information is received as a result of a criminal records check from the Disclosure & Barring Service (England & Wales) or Disclosure Scotland or Access NI, the individual must be immediately reported to the police.

It is also an offence for anyone knowingly to employ such a person in such a capacity, either on a voluntary or a paid basis.

Schedule Four offences include murder, manslaughter, rape and offences against children

POCA: Protection of Children Act List. This is a list of people banned from working with children, formerly managed by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) on behalf of the Department of Health (DH), and now managed by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS))

POVA: Protection of Vulnerable Adults List. This is a list of people banned from working with vulnerable adults, formerly managed by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) on behalf of the Department of Health (DH), and now managed by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)

This list was formerly maintained by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and was known as ‘List

This list is now maintained by the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)

Operational Framework

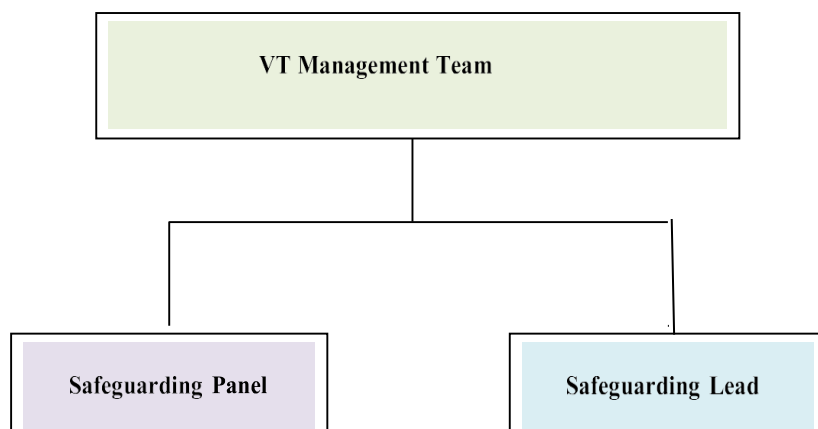
Introduction

Varsity Training carries out its responsibilities in relation to safeguarding through the following structure:

- VT Management Team
- The Safeguarding Panel
- Designated Safeguarding Lead

The VT Management Team oversees the currency of the Policy and its implementation. The VT Management Team has responsibility for the:

- Safeguarding Panel (constituted of members from the VT Management Team) which investigates any safeguarding incidents
- Safeguarding Lead (designated by the VT Management Team) who undertake direct activities related to safeguarding.



Safeguarding Panel

The Safeguarding Panel's responsibilities are to investigate any safeguarding incidences that are reported by Varsity Training staff, consultants or external sources (eg learner, parent of learner).

The Safeguarding Panel will make a judgement about what action, if necessary, should be taken in relation to an incident.

Safeguarding Lead

The responsibilities of the Varsity Training Safeguarding Lead are to:

- act as a source of advice on safeguarding matters
- receive copies of the Safeguarding Report forms
- receive appropriate copies of the Disclosure Declaration Form
- respond to communications made to the vtregulation or other email addresses
- constitute the Safeguarding Panel with members of the Management Team
- co-ordinate action within Varsity Training and liaise with the appropriate authorities or agencies about suspected or actual cases of child, young person or vulnerable adult abuse
- provide guidance and support to those dealing with any issues about safeguarding children, young people or vulnerable adults involving the inappropriate behaviour or actions of a member of Varsity Training staff .
- advise on safeguarding training within Varsity Training.

The Safeguarding Lead will be Varsity Training staff member, identified and nominated on the basis of their registration and/or experience as a social worker, probation officer, nurse, teacher or police officer.

The Safeguarding Leads are designated by and accountable to the VT Management Team

Reporting Policy and Procedures

Responding to Safeguarding concerns

Roles and Responsibilities

It is vital that anyone who suspects that a child, young person or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm or abuse, takes personal responsibility to act. Keeping worries or concerns to yourself may put children, young people and vulnerable adults at further risk of harm. It is not Varsity Training's responsibility to investigate a child or adult safeguarding complaint but to refer concerns to local children's and/or adults social care departments or the police.

Responding to a Safeguarding Concern

Concerns about safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults may arise in different situations. You may:

- witness or observe something
- hear it in person or from others by phone/email/letter
- be told directly.

The following guidance must be followed if you receive an allegation of child, young person or vulnerable adult abuse or if a disclosure or allegation of abuse is being made to you by a child, young person or vulnerable adult:

- listen to what they have to say with an open mind
- do not ask probing or leading questions designed to get them to reveal more
- never stop a person who is freely recalling significant events
- check your understanding of the situation, without being investigative
- explain that you cannot keep such information confidential, and that you have a responsibility to report what they have said to the Safeguarding Lead. It is important to record if the person has consented to having the information shared
- make a note of the discussion, taking care to record the timing, setting and people present as well as what was said
- ensure that any medical attention needed is addressed as a priority.

Reporting Information

Staff must inform the Safeguarding Lead (via e-mail: vtregulation@varsitytraining.co.uk).

Use the Varsity Training Safeguarding Concerns Report Form to record as much information as you can about the situation (eg what has happened, where and when, who was involved, any contact details and what action, if any, has so far been taken). This information should be passed immediately (within 5 working days) to the Safeguarding Lead via the e-mail address.

Please do pass on what information you have, even if the informant has only divulged a little or will not give their details. The information may join up with reports from someone else. It is best not to talk about this information with anyone other than the Safeguarding Lead as rumours spread quickly and can be damaging and might even hinder any investigation that may result.

What will happen next

When you contact the Safeguarding Lead, they may discuss your concerns with you and decide what action to take. They will not start a safeguarding investigation but will make sure if necessary that the relevant authorities have the information they need to decide themselves what to do next. The Safeguarding Lead will treat all information received with complete discretion and will maintain as much confidentiality as possible whilst making sure that action is taken to safeguard a child, young person or vulnerable adult. All information given will be treated seriously and with respect for the person providing it.

If an allegation of abuse is being made against you (Staff) **please refer to the appropriate HR policies and procedures.**

Information sharing

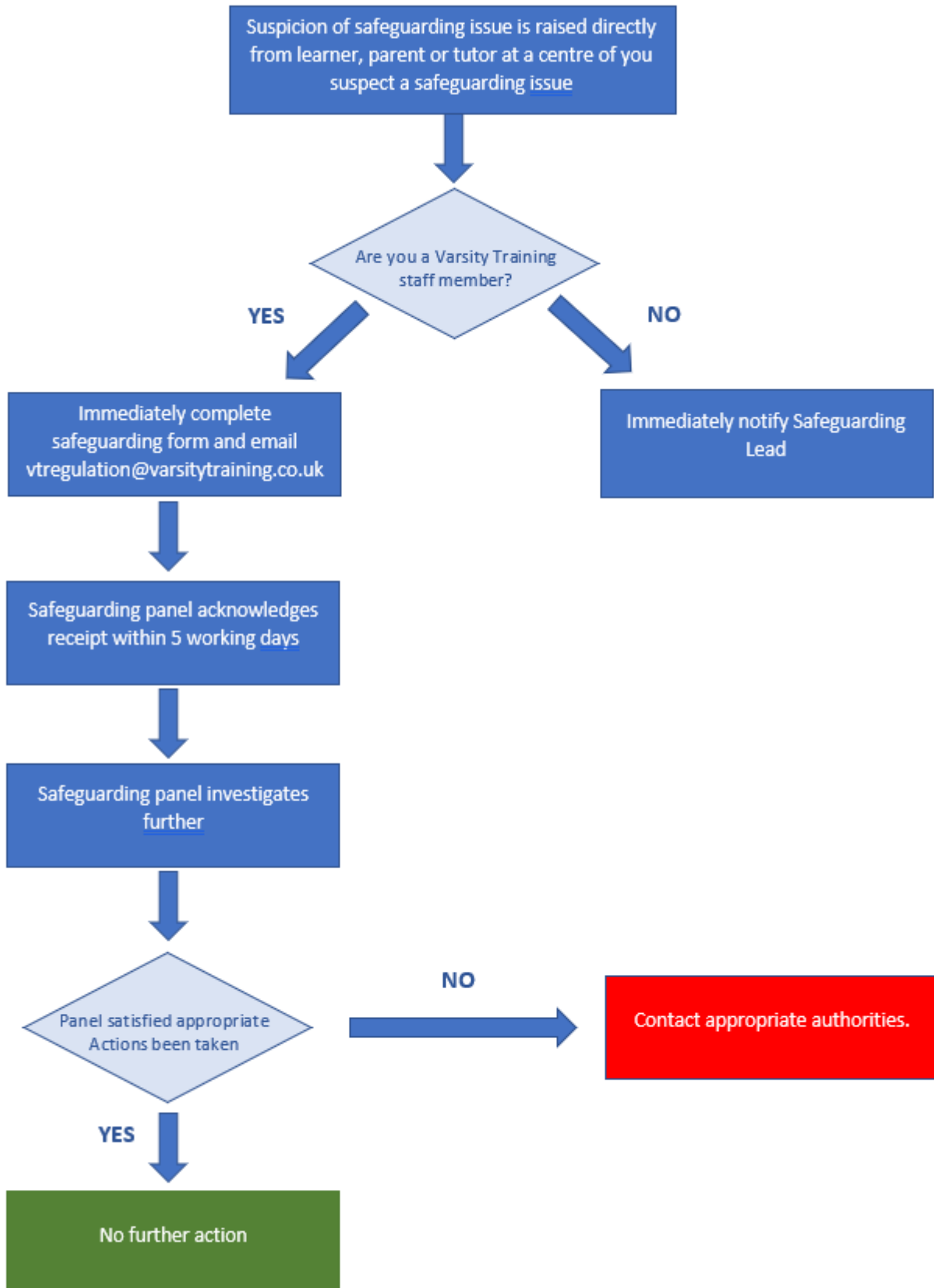
If the allegation constitutes a criminal offence, then Varsity Training will always share the information with relevant social care agencies in order to protect the child, young person or vulnerable adult. If there is insufficient information to enable a referral then the reasons for this will be recorded.

Varsity Training recognises its responsibility to protect the identity of anyone reporting suspected or actual abuse and no such disclosure will be made without careful consultation and prior approval at senior level. Gaining approval for disclosure will not delay the consultative and referral process as the welfare of a child, young person or vulnerable adult will always be the paramount consideration.

Further support

It is always possible that reading or talking about safeguarding will cause distress, particularly if you have had direct experience yourself. Any individual requiring further advice or support can contact the NSPCC Child Protection Helpline. This is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 0808 800 5000.

Reporting Flow Sheet for use by Varsity Training staff.



Implementation

In order to achieve the successful implementation of this policy, Varsity Training will:

- issue the general policy statement to all its centres to ensure that it should be available on request to learners and other interested parties
- During induction staff are made aware of Varsity training policies. These are read, and staff sign to say they have read and agreed to follow and implement procedures. All safeguarding policies are on Moodle where all staff and learners have access to these, and during induction learners are encouraged to read.
- provide development activities appropriate to the needs of staff members on a regular basis
- ensure that issues concerning safety and confidentiality are addressed as an integral part of qualification development, review and assessment guidance

Key definitions and concepts

Although the legal context is different for vulnerable adults, much of the following information on the types of abuse and neglect of children and young people is also applicable to vulnerable adults.

Abuse and Neglect – Children and young people

It is generally accepted that there are five main forms of abuse. The following definitions are based on those from Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2006) and Safeguarding Children: Working Together under the Children Act 2004.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment of a child or young person. Someone may abuse or neglect a child or young person by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Children or young people may be abused in a family, institutional setting or community setting; by those known to them, or more rarely by a stranger. They may be abused by adult/s, another child or children or young people.

1. Physical Abuse

Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child or young person. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness. An important indicator of abuse is where bruises or injuries are unexplained or the explanation does not fit the injury.

2. Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill treatment of a child or young person such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's or young person's emotional development. It may involve making a child or young person feel or believe they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve serious bullying causing children and young people frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children or young people. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child or young person, though it may occur alone.

3. Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution whether or not the child or young person is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative or non-penetrative acts. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children or young people in looking at pornographic material or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children or young people to behave in sexually inappropriate way.

4. Neglect

Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a child's or young person's basic physical and psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's or young person's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failing to protect a child or young person from physical harm or danger, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of a child's or young person's basic emotional needs.

5. Bullying

Bullying may come from another child or young person or an adult. Bullying is defined as - deliberate hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves.

There are four main types of bullying.

- 1) Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, slapping),
- 2) Verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, name-calling, graffiti, threats, abusive text messages, abuse via social media),
- 3) Emotional (e.g. tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating, ignoring, isolating from the group),
- 4) Sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

Additional Information

Some children or young people may be particularly vulnerable to abuse. For example there is research which has found that children and young people with special needs are three times more likely to be abused than other children and young people. Reasons for this might be that children and young people with special needs :

- Have fewer outside contacts than others
- Have an impaired capacity to resist or avoid abuse
- Require intimate care from a number of carers which may both increase the risk of exposure to abusive behaviour and make it more difficult to set and maintain physical boundaries
- Use different communication methods or may lack the appropriate vocabulary - which might provide a barrier for a child or young person wanting to communicate about their concerns

Some studies suggest children or young people from minority ethnic groups may be at increased risk of abuse through factors such as stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination.

There is also extensive evidence that children and families from ethnic minority groups often fail to receive an appropriate service from the statutory authorities when concerns are raised about a child's welfare. Over-reaction and inaction have both been shown to be based on misunderstandings and misinterpretations of different cultural patterns, which have led to failure to meet children's or young people's needs.

Other groups of children or young people who might be particularly vulnerable are those who are seeking asylum, looked after, or who are living with parents/carers who misuse drugs and/or alcohol.

Vulnerable Adults Abuse - Definitions

Adult abuse is:

- a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons
- any behaviour towards a person that deliberately or unknowingly causes him or her harm, endangers their life or violates their rights
- physical, sexual, emotional, financial or through neglect or discrimination
- perpetrated by an individual, a group or an organisation

"No Secrets" DOH 2000

Financial Abuse, Discriminatory Abuse & Institutional Abuse

- Financial abuse is abuse or misuse of possessions or money. Indicators may be an unusual shortage of money to pay bills, to buy food or to maintain adequate living conditions.
- Discriminatory abuse is harassment or similar discriminatory or derogatory treatment which is racist, sexist or refers to disability.
- Institutional abuse or Practice abuse is neglect due to bad or poor care practice or unsatisfactory professional practice and low standards.

This policy is owned and maintained by our Operations Manager and Director who hold responsibility for reviewing and updating this policy on an annual basis.

Name of reviewer: Del Wraight

Signature: 

Date of review: 29/07/2022

Next review due date: 28/07/2023