

LEARNING AND SKILLS SERVICE

ONLINE AND E-SAFETY POLICY



1. Introduction

This policy has been drawn up based on legislation, policy and guidance that seeks to protect people when accessing digital technologies.

Learning and Skills Service understand the breadth of the issues classified within e-safety is considerable, but can be categorised into three areas of risk

- content: being exposed to illegal, inappropriate or harmful material
- contact: being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users
- conduct: personal online behaviour that increases the likelihood of, or causes, harm.

2. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to

- All Learning and Skills Service personnel, training providers and their personnel, learners and partners carrying out activity on behalf of the Learning and Skills Service.

3. Learning and Skills believe that:

- No one should experience abuse of any kind
- People should be able to use the internet for education and personal development, but safeguards need to be in place to ensure they are kept safe at all times.

4. Learning and Skills recognise that:

Technological skills are vital to prepare people for life in modern Britain including in learning, work and their personal life. This includes how to locate, retrieve and exchange information using a variety of technologies. However, these technologies and electronic communications present risks to vulnerable groups as well as benefits. Internet use for work, home, social and leisure activities is expanding across all sectors of society. This brings staff and learners into contact with a wide variety of influences some of which may be unsuitable. These new technologies are enhancing communication and the sharing of information, which inevitably challenge the definitions and boundaries of the adult learning

environment. Current and emerging technologies used in learning and more importantly, in learners' personal lives include:

- Internet websites
- Virtual Learning Environments (VLE)
- Instant messaging
- Social networking sites
- E-mails
- Blogs
- Podcasting
- Video broadcasting sites
- Chat rooms
- Gaming and gambling sites
- Music download sites
- Mobile phones with camera and video functionality
- Digital cameras
- Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs)
- Smart phones with e-mail and web applications

All the above have potential to help raise standards of teaching and learning, but may equally present challenges to staff, learners and tutors in terms of keeping themselves safe and acting within relevant laws. These challenges include:

- Exposure to inappropriate, illegal or harmful material
- Cyber-bullying via websites, social media, mobile phones or other technologies
- Sharing of personal images without consent or knowledge
- Identity theft or invasion of privacy and unauthorised access to personal information
- Downloading copyrighted materials without permission e.g. music or video files
- Exposure to inappropriate advertising, online gambling and financial scams
- Safeguarding issues such as grooming (children or vulnerable adults)
- Safeguarding issues including radicalisation
- Other illegal activities

Learning and Skills seeks to maximise the educational benefit that can be obtained by exploiting the use of technologies, whilst at the same time minimising any associated risks.

All users should know what their responsibilities are, what to do and who to report to if they come across inappropriate material.

- the online world provides everyone with many opportunities; however, it can also present risks and challenges

- we have a duty to ensure that all people involved in our organisation are protected from potential harm online
- we have a responsibility to help people safe online, whether or not they are using Learning and Skills Service's network and devices
- all people, regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- working in partnership is essential in promoting people's welfare and in helping people to be responsible in their approach to online safety.

5. Learning and Skills will seek to keep people safe by:

- providing clear and specific directions to staff and partners on how to behave online through contractual obligations
- ensuring e-safety is embedded in all teaching and learning offered by the Learning and Skills Service
- supporting and encouraging people using our service to use the internet, social media and mobile phones in a way that keeps them safe and shows respect for others
- supporting and encouraging parents and carers to do what they can to keep their children safe online
- developing clear and robust procedures to enable us to respond appropriately to any incidents of inappropriate online behaviour, whether by an adult or a child/young person
- reviewing and updating the security of our information systems regularly
- ensuring that usernames, logins, email accounts and passwords are used effectively
- ensuring personal information about the adults and children who are involved in our organisation is held securely and shared only as appropriate
- ensuring that images of children, young people and families are used only after their written permission has been obtained, and only for the purpose for which consent has been given
- providing supervision, support and training for staff and volunteers about online safety
- examining and risk assessing any social media platforms and new technologies before they are used within the organisation.

6. Staff including Subcontracted provision

All teaching and non-teaching staff delivering on behalf of Learning and Skills are responsible for supporting safe behaviour throughout their provision and following e-safety procedures in line with this policy. All staff should:

- Act in accordance with this E-Safety Policy and their own organisation's safeguarding policies
- Participate in any e-safety training and awareness raising sessions recommended by Learning and Skills Service
- Understand incident reporting procedures and report any suspicion of misuse to their Designated Safeguarding Lead
- Ensure all digital communications are professional at all times and carried out in line with this policy including any blogs or social networking sites. Inappropriate comments could be considered gross misconduct
- Educate learners how to stay safe online with focus on those learners who are young and/or have been identified as vulnerable. Whilst regulation and technical solutions (such as filtering systems) are important, they must be balanced with educating learners to take a responsible approach. The education of learners in e-safety is an essential part of using technology in classes. Staff should act as a good role model in their own use of ICT
- Direct learners to internet sites appropriate for use in sessions or to support learning outside the classroom and procedures should be followed to report any unsuitable material found. Where practicable, staff and sub-contractors should pre-check sites and any possible searches
- Be vigilant in monitoring the content of websites where learners are able to freely search the internet
- Be aware and firm with handbook and ground rules for sessions of the potential for cyber-bullying e.g. through the use of forums, social networking sites, via internal class emails or text messaging which may cause hurt or distress
- Teach learners to be critically aware of materials or content they can access online and be guided to validate the accuracy of information
- Educate learners to respect copyright laws and acknowledge sources of information used from the internet

7. If online abuse occurs, we will respond to it by:

- having clear and robust safeguarding procedures in place for responding to abuse (including online abuse)
- providing support and training for all staff and volunteers on dealing with all forms of abuse, including bullying/cyberbullying, emotional abuse, sexting, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation
- making sure our response takes the needs of the person experiencing abuse, any bystanders and our organisation as a whole into account
- reviewing the plan developed to address online abuse at regular intervals, in order to ensure that any problems have been resolved in the long term.

Related policies and procedures This policy statement should be read alongside Learning and Skills Service policies and procedures, including:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Prevent Policy

8. Responding to issues

It is important that any issues are dealt with as soon as possible in a proportionate and fair manner. Sub-contractors should also inform Learning and Skills Service Designated Safeguarding Lead of the nature of the concern and the action taken.

Any incidents around the misuse of technologies or the internet, where there is a potential threat to another learner, vulnerable person or member of staff must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Useful links

- <https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>
- www.digizen.org
- www.ceop.police.uk
- www.facebook.com/safety
- www.getsafeonline.org
- <http://www.saferinternet.org.uk>
- www.childnet.com
- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>
- <http://www.internetmatters.org>
- <http://www.preventforfeandtraining.org.uk>
- <https://nationalonlinesafety.com>
- <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/>

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