

## **Safeguarding and Prevent Policy and Procedures 2023 2024**

### **Introduction**

The Adult College for Rural East Sussex has a duty of care to all learners, staff and volunteers to ensure they have a safe and healthy environment in which to learn and work and which promotes well-being and security and is free from radicalisation, whether in a face to face or online scenario.

We have a particular responsibility to safeguard vulnerable adults to prevent abuse, when possible, and to respond quickly and appropriately to suspected or actual allegations of abuse.

This policy sets out our commitment to the health, safety and welfare of everyone involved in courses, activities and work which come under the responsibility of the College. It has been adapted from the Sussex Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures (edition 4 May 2019) for the protection of Vulnerable Adults.

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure that the rights of vulnerable individuals and groups are protected through staff awareness of the issues and the following of statutory and local guidelines in the reporting of concerns.

It is important to note that any adult can become vulnerable at any time and for any period of time, short or longer term. This policy covers any eventuality and circumstance, whether in a face to face or online scenario.

All staff working within Adult Learning are responsible for recording and reporting protection and radicalisation concerns.

### **Definition**

A vulnerable adult is defined as a person aged 18 years and over who may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm or from being exploited. The Safeguarding Vulnerable groups Act 2006 (updated September 2020) defines a 'vulnerable adult' as a person aged 18 or over who is:

- In residential accommodation
- Receiving a social care service / welfare service of a prescribed description
- Receiving a health service or any form of health care
- Living in sheltered housing
- Receiving domiciliary care
- Detained in lawful custody or under a probation order / order of a court
- Requiring assistance in the conduct of his/her affairs
- Receiving a service or participating in any activity provided specifically for persons who have particular needs because of age, has any form of disability, or has a prescribed physical or mental problem. (Dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia are excluded disabilities)

## **What is Abuse?**

Adult abuse is defined as “a violation of an individual’s human and civil rights by any other person or persons”. The characteristics of abuse can take a number of forms and cause individuals to suffer pain, fear and distress, reaching well beyond the time of the actual incident(s). Individuals who have experienced abuse may be too afraid or embarrassed to make any complaint. They may be reluctant to discuss their concerns with other people or unsure of who to trust or approach with their worries. There may be some situations where they are unaware that they are being abused.

Abuse can take many forms:

- Discriminatory abuse - abuse on grounds of someone's race, disability, gender, sexuality, religious belief, age, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity or sexual orientation.
- Physical abuse - hitting, pushing, burning, kicking or restraint.
- Emotional/Psychological abuse - verbal abuse, humiliation, bullying or the use of threats, blaming, isolation or removal from services or supportive networks.
- Financial abuse - illegal or improper use of a person's property, money, pension book, bank account or other belongings.
- Sexual abuse - direct or indirect sexual activity where the vulnerable person cannot or does not give their consent, including rape and sexual assault.
- Neglect - not providing a person with the essential care they need, thus causing them to suffer, and failure to provide access to appropriate health, social care or educational services.
- Institutional abuse – which is poor professional practice, including neglect, and which can take the form of isolated incidents or pervasive ill treatment including gross misconduct.
- Personal exploitation – involves denying an individual his/her rights or forcing him/her to perform tasks that are against his/her will.
- Violation of rights eg preventing an individual speaking his/her thoughts and opinions.

In respect of safeguarding individuals from radicalisation, ACRES works to the Prevent element of the Government’s Counter Terrorism Strategy, and where deemed appropriate, seeks external support for learners through referrals to the Channel Programme. This programme aims to work with the individual to address their specific vulnerabilities, prevent them becoming further radicalised and possible entering the criminal justice system because of their actions. It is recognised that radicalisation can occur to an individual from any section of society and is not particular to any racial, ethnic or social group. It is further recognised that in many instances the process of radicalisation is essentially one of grooming by others.

## **Concerns about Abuse**

A member of staff discovering an allegation or suspicion of abuse or a learner(s) becoming radicalised, should report it in person, by email or on the telephone to the Safeguarding Officer who has responsibility to maintain a safe and healthy environment for learning and work. If the allegation is discovered by a learner, then they should inform a member of staff who will then inform the Safeguarding Officer.

If the staff member/learner has been told about the allegation in confidence, they should attempt to gain the consent of the individual to make a referral to another agency. Adults can generally insist on confidentiality being maintained unless there are circumstances in which it is considered their wishes must be overridden. However, the gaining of consent is not essential in order for information to be passed on. Consideration needs to be given to:

- The scale of the abuse.
- The risk of harm to others.
- The capacity of the individual to understand the issues of abuse and consent.

If there is any doubt about whether or not to report an issue, then it should be reported.

As a matter of best practice, vulnerable adults should not be promised or offered confidentiality by a member of staff. It is important for staff to be able to share concerns and seek help within the College and this must be explained to the learner.

If a learner contacts the office to share concerns which are of a safeguarding nature the learner should be put through to the Safeguarding Officer immediately. In the event that the Safeguarding Officer is not immediately available and assuming there is no immediate risk of harm, the member of staff should take contact details for the student and explain that the Safeguarding Officer will call them back as soon as they become available as a matter of priority. The member of staff should not enter into a detailed dialogue with the learner themselves.

In emergency situations where immediate action is needed to safeguard the health and safety of the individual or anyone else who may be at risk, the emergency services must be contacted.

Where a crime is taking place, has just occurred or is suspected, the police must be contacted immediately.

### **Signs of Potential Harm or Abuse**

Because vulnerable adults may not be able to report abuse themselves, it is important that professionals and volunteers working with those groups recognise signs and symptoms of possible abuse. Staff should be aware of signs of potential abuse but keep an open mind and not jump to conclusions.

This list is not definitive and your relationship with a vulnerable person may mean that you are sensitive to changes in their behaviour which are not detailed here but which give you cause for concern

- **Signs of potential physical abuse:** a history of unexplained falls or minor injuries, finger marks, clusters of bruises, untreated medical problems and unexplained weight loss.
- **Signs of potential sexual abuse:** reported or observed pain, bruising, soreness and/or infections, changes in usual behaviour.

- **Signs of potential psychological/emotional abuse:** vulnerable person seems very distressed, confused or unusually withdrawn, appears frightened of care-giver or other person.
- **Signs of potential financial abuse:** unexplained or sudden withdrawal of money from accounts, inability to pay bills, an unusual interest in vulnerable person's assets, failure to explain financial transactions by person managing the vulnerable person's money.
- **Signs of potential neglect:** living conditions are filthy/cold, clothing is dirty or inappropriate, the person's health is deteriorating and they are not getting the medical treatment and care they need.
- **Signs of potential discriminatory abuse:** the vulnerable person is excluded from activities; there is no attempt to address their communication needs or provide food or care that meets their cultural needs.
- **Signs of potential institutional abuse:** repeated concerns about poor care or ill-treatment, lack of flexibility about waking/bedtimes, no respect of privacy, poor bedding or heating, lack of individual care planning, inadequate provision and choice of food and drink.

#### **Possible signs of radicalisation include:**

- The individual's views become increasingly extreme regarding another section of society or government policy.
- The individual becomes increasingly intolerant of more moderate views.
- The individual expresses a desire/intent to take part in or support extremist activity.
- They are observed downloading, viewing or sharing extremist propaganda from the web.
- They become withdrawn and focus on one ideology.
- The individual may change their appearance and their health may suffer (including mental health) and they become isolated from family, friends, peers or social groups.

#### **Responsibility for Recording and Reporting**

It is the responsibility of all staff working with vulnerable adults, whether in a paid or voluntary capacity, to recognise and report abuse or radicalisation using ACRES's reporting procedure. It is never someone else's responsibility. The Safeguarding Officer can be reached on [07545 650088](tel:07545650088) or by emailing [h.dsilva@acres.org.uk](mailto:h.dsilva@acres.org.uk)

If a learner discloses to you that they or another vulnerable adult have been, or are being abused/radicalised:

#### **Do**

- Listen very carefully to what they tell you
- Take what is said seriously and accept what you are told
- Stay calm and reassure the learner that they have done the right thing in talking to you
- Keep a careful record of what they see, what they hear and what they do and prepare a written record of the allegation or suspicion of abuse as soon as possible (and no later than 24 hours afterwards) using the form attached in

the appendix to this document and forward it, confidentially, to the Safeguarding Officer

- Tell them that you must pass this information on but that only those that need to know will be told. Tell them to whom you will report the matter

On receipt of the report the Safeguarding Officer will then undertake an immediate risk assessment to identify short term steps required to safeguard the learner while an investigation is being carried out.

### **Do Not**

- Panic
- Promise to keep things secret. You have a duty to refer a vulnerable adult who is at risk
- Lie or say that 'everything will be fine' now that they have told you
- Criticise the abuser
- Ask lots of detailed or leading questions
- Press the learner for answers they are unwilling to give

A central record of concerns and actions taken is kept on a secured googledoc, shared exclusively with the Adult Learning Manager(ALM) in an ALM capacity as well as within the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead (Safeguarding Officer).

### **Safeguarding Learners who are Vulnerable to Extremism**

The Adult College for Rural East Sussex (ACRES) is committed to providing a secure environment for learners, where they feel safe and are kept safe. All adults at ACRES recognise that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility irrespective of the role they undertake or whether their role has direct contact or responsibility for learners or not.

In 2010 the Government published the Prevent Strategy, a national programme to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. In 2012, Channel, a key element of Prevent, produced a guide for Local Partnerships protecting vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism. In recent years there has been an awareness of the specific need to safeguard children, young people and families from violent extremism.

ACRES values freedom of speech and the expansion of beliefs/ideology as fundamental rights which underpin our society's values. Both learners and staff have the right to speak freely and voice their opinions. However, freedom comes with responsibility and free speech designed to manipulate the vulnerable or that leads to violence and harm of others goes against the moral principles in which freedom of speech is valued. Free speech is not an unqualified privilege; it is subject to laws and policies governing equality, human rights, community safety and community cohesion.

The current threat from terrorism in the United Kingdom may include the exploitation of vulnerable people, to involve them in terrorism or in activity in support of terrorism. The normalisation of extreme views may also make adults vulnerable to future manipulation and exploitation. ACRES is clear that this exploitation and radicalisation should be viewed as a safeguarding concern.

ACRES seeks to protect vulnerable adults against the messages of all violent extremism. We will closely follow any locally agreed procedure as set out by the Local Authority in safeguarding individuals vulnerable to extremism and radicalisation.

When a member of staff has any concerns that a learner may be at risk of radicalisation or involvement in terrorism, they should speak with the Safeguarding Officer immediately.

Learners may become susceptible to radicalisation through a range of social, personal and environmental factors - it is known that violent extremists exploit vulnerabilities in individuals to drive a wedge between them and their families and communities. It is vital that staff are able to recognise those vulnerabilities.

As part of wider safeguarding responsibilities ACRES staff will be alert to:

- Disclosures by learners of their exposure to the extremist actions, views or materials of others outside of ACRES, such as in their homes or community groups, especially where learners have not actively sought these out
- Graffiti symbols, writing or art work promoting extremist messages or images
- Learners accessing extremist material online, including through social networking sites
- Changes in behaviour, friendship or actions and requests for assistance
- Learners voicing opinions drawn from extremist ideologies and narratives
- Use of extremist or 'hate' terms to exclude others or incite violence
- Intolerance of difference, whether secular or religious or, in line with our equalities policy, views based on, but not exclusive to, gender, disability, homophobia, race, colour or culture
- Attempts to impose extremist views or practices on others
- Anti-Western or Anti-British views

This list is not exhaustive, nor does it mean that all people experiencing the above are at risk of radicalisation for the purposes of violent extremism.

We will ensure that all of our staff are equipped to recognise extremism and are skilled and confident enough to challenge it.

We will be flexible enough to adapt our teaching, learning and assessment approaches, as appropriate, so as to address specific issues to become even more relevant to the current issues of extremism and radicalisation. In doing so we will apply the 'key ingredients' for success following the three broad categories of:

- Making a connection with learners through good teaching, learning and assessment and a learner centred approach
- Facilitating a 'safe space' for dialogue
- Equipping our learners with the appropriate skills, knowledge, understanding and awareness for resilience

## **Responding to Reported Safeguarding Incidents**

Members of staff should not investigate any allegations themselves or ask questions as this might prejudice any legal proceedings and it is not part of their role to do so. It is also important that they do not confront an alleged abuser.

The Safeguarding Officer will undertake an initial investigation of the reported incident. This may involve 'interviewing' staff and learners.

In all cases where there is serious risk to a learner the Safeguarding Officer will agree with the Chair of ACRES' Board immediate steps to be taken to remove the risk and separate the learner from the person accused of abuse. This may include suspension of an accused member of staff or learner, without prejudice to the findings of the investigation.

Following the investigation, the Adult Learning Manager, as Safeguarding Officer, will propose a response. If no evidence of abuse can be established the response may be 'no action required'. Other action steps may include, for example:

- Placement of the learner in another class
- Assignment of a member of staff or volunteer to accompany the learner to class
- Training / Retraining of staff
- Initiating disciplinary procedures of staff, potentially up to dismissal
- Activating the learners' complaints procedure, potentially up to exclusion of another learner from class(es).

The Safeguarding Officer will keep the member of staff who raised the concerns informed on progress/outcomes on a 'need to know' basis as well as any other critical staff who would need to know 'need to know basis' information so as to avoid further issues and to continue the safeguard the learner / member of staff.

All records relating to the initial report and subsequent investigation and outcomes will be stored securely within a secure online folder with restricted share and access rights exclusively to the Safeguarding Officer and Adult Learning Manager.

## **Responsibilities**

All members of staff have a responsibility to be aware of this policy and to report any suspicions or concerns that they may have about abuse to the Safeguarding Officer.

The Adult Learning Manager has responsibility to ensure a safe and healthy environment for learning and work.

This policy will be communicated to all learners and staff via the ACRES' website and new staff will be made aware of their duties under this policy at induction. Refresher training for all staff and tutors will be made available at staff events and in the event that a particular need arises, or by accessing online learning content.

## **Other Safeguarding Concerns**

Where a member of staff has a concern about a learner, colleague or other staff member, which is not connected to potential abuse, they should raise this concern

with the Safeguarding Officer who will consider the concerns and agree a way forward.

### **Safeguarding Staff and Students – Online learning**

ACRES will ensure all staff and students are aware of safe working practices when teaching, learning or assessing online, on online courses, to ensure learners and staff know how to keep themselves safe online. More information can be found within the 'Notes and guidance for tutors teaching online/distance courses' and within the online student agreement which all students must read and sign, prior to joining an online classroom to confirm they will comply with the guidelines to ensure they stay safe online.

### **Safeguarding with ACRES**

Ensuring the safety of learners and staff at ACRES is of paramount importance and as well as the above procedure, ACRES ensures the safety of its learners and staff by:

- Safe recruitment - all staff and volunteers are vetted under the enhanced Disclosure and Barring procedures
- First Aid Training – where courses take place with no trained first aider on site, ACRES will ensure staff undertake appropriate First Aid training and that this certification is maintained and renewed as required
- Venues – all external venues are annually risk assessed to ensure their appropriateness for the purposes in which we are hiring them
- No learners undertake Health and Fitness activities until they have completed a pre-course health questionnaire which has been reviewed by the tutor so they can differentiate activities appropriately to ensure learner safety at all times
- Activity risk assessments are completed and checked by management, where an activity risk has been identified
- Where appropriate, Health and Safety guidelines are drawn up and agreed with learners so that they are aware of likely risks and how to prevent accidents in the classroom (face to face or virtual)
- Observations of teaching, learning and assessment pay specific attention to safeguarding and Health and Safety issues
- E-safety information available on ACRES' website

### **Fundamental British Values**

As part of our organisational culture ACRES ensures its staff teams are aware of fundamental British values and that they exemplify them in their day to day practice, role modelling to students how these values can ensure a safe and secure learning environment, celebrating difference and embedding diversity.

- **Democracy**  
A culture built upon freedom and equality, where everyone is aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- **Rule of Law**  
The need for rules to make a happy, safe and secure environment to live and work and learn.



- **Respect & Tolerance**  
Understanding that we all don't share the same beliefs and values. Respecting the values, ideas and beliefs of others whilst not imposing our own on others.
- **Individual Liberty**  
Protection of individual rights and the right of others you work/learn/interact with.

Fundamental British Values underpin what it is to be a citizen in a modern and diverse Great Britain valuing our community and celebrating the diversity of the UK.

These values are not exclusive to being British and are shared by other democratic countries as a way of creating an orderly society, where individual members can feel safe, valued and can contribute for the good of themselves and others.

### **Training**

The Learning and Development team, in conjunction with the ALM as Safeguarding Officer, will procure appropriate training to ensure that staff maintain knowledge and skills in order to be able to carry out their responsibilities to ensure the protection of vulnerable adults. The training will cover recognition of radicalisation, abuse, key policy principles and code of practice including the rights of vulnerable adults, alert procedures, record keeping and emotional support.

### **Legislation**

This policy is informed by and adheres to the following legislation:

- Safeguarding and Vulnerable groups Act 2006
- Care Standards Act 2000
- NHS and Community Care Act 1990
- Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998
- Mental Health Act 1983

Guidance has been taken from 'Safer Learning, Safer Practice: a whole-organisation approach to safeguarding vulnerable adults for the learning and skills sector' (2007) NIACE/DfES.

### **Key contacts**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact details</b>
Designated Safeguarding Lead (ACRES' Safeguarding Officer)	Helen D'Silva	<a href="mailto:h.dsilva@acres.org.uk">h.dsilva@acres.org.uk</a> 07545 650088
Chair of ACRES' Board	Hugh Hennebry	01825 764844

## Safeguarding - Incident Report Form

**Strictly Confidential**



Use this form to record

- any concern you have about the potential abuse of a learner/staff member or volunteer
- the disclosure of abuse made to you by a learner or colleague

### **Note:**

This report should be factual and objective based. It should not include opinions or personal interpretations of the facts presented. It must contain as much detail as possible and be as accurate as you are able to record it. This report may form part of a criminal investigation.

<b>Name of learner/staff member/volunteer you are writing about</b>	
<b>Course they are attending / Event when the incident / concern occurred</b>	
<b>Venue of course (including online) or location where incident / concern occurred</b>	
<b>Contact details</b>	
<b>Briefly describe what happened / what is the nature and reason for your concern (include dates and times where possible)</b>	
<b>Contact details of any witnesses:</b>	
<b>Please note any obvious physical signs of abuse here:</b>	

