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Safeguarding Handbook



NEED HELP? CALL OUR HELP LINE
01661 843819

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What's this handbook for?

Welcome to your Safeguarding and Prevent Handbook.

Release Potential Ltd is committed to safeguarding and recognises the important role we have to play in promoting the safety and welfare of young people and vulnerable adults who learn with us.

We expect all staff, partners, employers, and visitors to share this commitment.

The Safeguarding and Prevent policy set out how we ensure this is embedded across the organisation.

This handbook provides all staff with information regarding a range of issues they may come across in carrying out their roles, and collectively presents a wide-ranging set of documents that help to protect our learners generally and how we engage with those who are vulnerable.

To this end the handbook will reference other key policies, processes, and procedures you will need to be familiar with and refer to at appropriate times.

The Safeguarding and Prevent policy should not be used in isolation but considered in conjunction with other relevant documents when needed, all of which are referenced in section 4 of the handbook.

Gaye Hutchinson

CEO

Safeguarding and Prevent Policy

Organisations and staff working in Further Education in the UK have a statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people, and vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding children is defined in “Working together to safeguard 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

Safeguarding vulnerable adults is defined in the “Care and support statutory guidance” issued under the Care Act 2014 as:

- protecting the rights of adults to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect
- people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect
- people and organisations making sure that the adult’s wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, taking fully into account their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action

- recognising that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear or unrealistic about their personal circumstances and therefore potential risks to their safety or well-being.

The Prevent strategy, published by the Government in 2011, is part of the overall counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST. The aim of the Prevent strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. In the Act this has simply been expressed as the need to “prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.

The 2011 Prevent strategy has three specific strategic objectives:

- respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it
- prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support and
- work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to address

This Safeguarding and Prevent Policy reflects the importance we place in our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of our learners and staff by protecting them from harm.

The main aims of this policy are to ensure that learners, staff, employers and visitors are fully engaged in being vigilant about raising awareness, and that we work alongside other agencies to ensure our learners and staff are safe from harm.

Release Potential Ltd will take action needed to protect children, young persons and vulnerable adults from:

- Neglect
- Physical, sexual and emotional abuse
- Bullying, including online bullying and prejudice-based bullying
- Racist, disability and homophobic or transphobic abuse
- Gender-based violence
- Upskirting
- Peer-on-peer abuse, such as sexual violence and harassment
- Radicalisation and/or extremist behaviour
- Sexual exploitation and trafficking
- Criminal exploitation, including county lines
- Serious violent crime
- Risks linked to using technology and social media, including online bullying
- Risks of being groomed online for exploitation or radicalisation
- Risks of accessing and generating inappropriate content, for example 'sexting'

- Teenage relationship abuse
- Homelessness and substance misuse
- Issues that may be specific to a local area or population, for example gang activity and youth violence
- Female genital mutilation
- Forced marriage
- Fabricated or induced illness
- Domestic abuse and poor parenting/caring
- So-called honour-based violence
- Other issues not listed here but that pose a risk to children, young persons and vulnerable adults.

Safeguarding is not just about protecting children, young persons and vulnerable adults from deliberate harm, neglect, and failure to act. It relates to broader aspects of care and education, including:

- Health and safety and well-being, including their mental health and providing first aid
- Meeting the needs of learners who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- Use of reasonable force
- Meeting the needs of learners with medical conditions
- Educational visits
- Intimate care and emotional well-being
- Appropriate arrangements to ensure learners' security, taking into account local contexts.
- Online safety and associated issues

Who's looking after this and what do they do?

Finance Director (Strategic)

Controls oversight at a strategic level for issues relating to Safeguarding and Prevent.

This role ensures that RPL monitors risks and is ready to deal appropriately with issues which arise:

- To ensure a staff structure is in place to fulfil safeguarding responsibilities
- To ensure safeguarding is afforded the utmost priority at the most senior level within the company
- To ensure procedures are in place for: managing breach of safeguarding allegations against learners and staff; whistle-blowing and safe recruitment practices
- To develop company-wide procedures, practice and guidance for safeguarding that are compliant with procedures.

Lead Safeguarding and Prevent Officer (LSPO - Operational)

- To ensure that monitoring review systems are in place to incorporate new guidance and legislation and to test out existing systems

- To ensure secure records concerning safeguarding are stored and shared appropriately
- To oversee the training of the Designated Safeguarding and Prevent Officers
- Oversee Designated Safeguarding and Prevent Officers

Designated Safeguarding and Prevent Officers (DSPO - Operational)

- To act as a source of support, advice and expertise when staff or learners have a concern about possible risk or harm
- To refer cases of suspected abuse or allegations to the LSPO
- To liaise with the LSPO regarding ongoing investigations where necessary
- To oversee the monitoring review systems

Contact

Any issues should be reported using:

safeguarding@release-potential.co.uk

Safeguarding

Objectives

In order to achieve these objectives Release Potential Ltd will concentrate on the following four areas:

- Leadership and values
- Teaching and learning
- Learner support
- Managing risk and responding to events

Leadership and Values

That promote shared responsibility, accountability and wellbeing for all learners, staff, employers and visitors. The promotion of respect, equality, diversity and inclusion, understanding and compassion through:

- Promoting core values of respect, equality, diversity, inclusion, democratic society, learner voice and participation
- Building staff and learner understanding of the issues
- Engaging with local communities
- Actively working with local authorities, police and other agencies
- Engaging with staff through education and training

Teaching and Learning

Promoting knowledge, skills and understanding to build the resilience of learners, by undermining extremist ideology through:

- Embedding equality, diversity and inclusion
- Embedding safeguarding
- Promoting wider skill development
- Recognising local needs and promoting universal rights
- Encouraging community participation

Learner Support

Arming staff with the confidence, knowledge and information to respond to and support learners in difficulty. Ensuring that staff are confident to take preventative and responsive steps working with partner professionals, families and communities through:

- Establishing effective staff and learner support
- Listening to what is happening in the workplace
- Implementing anti-bullying and harassment policies
- Challenging discriminatory behaviour
- Providing access to support for staff and learners
- Supporting at risk learners through Safeguarding and Prevent policies

- Raising learner esteem

Managing Risks and Responding to Events

To ensure that Release Potential Ltd monitors risks and is ready to deal appropriately with issues which arise through:

- Understanding the nature of the threat from extremism and terrorism, and the impact it may have
- Understanding and managing any potential risks within Release Potential Ltd from external influences
- Responding to local, national or international events
- Ensuring measures are in place to minimise the potential for staff or learners to be radicalised
- Developing effective ICT security and acceptable use policies

- Health & Safety Essentials (eLearning – every two year)
- Modern Slavery (eLearning – every two year)
- Safeguarding Adults (eLearning – every two year)
- Cyber Security Awareness (eLearning – every two year)
- Mental Health Awareness (eLearning – every two year)
- Managing Anxiety (eLearning – every two year)

Designated Safeguarding Leads - Recognised DSL training, ie Solvendis – refresher every two year

Recruiting Managers - Recruitment and Selection, Safer Recruitment (eLearning - every three year)

Safeguarding Training Commitment

Statement

Release Potential is fully committed to providing ongoing and relevant Safeguarding training, to ensure the safety of our staff and learners. We are committed to creating a safe environment for all. This includes ensuring appropriate training is in place and a safeguarding team is accessible.

The DSL maintains accurate records and holds all certificates of attendance / achievement which includes as a minimum:

- Safeguarding Induction/Annual Update provided by DSL
- Home Office eLearning Training on Prevent (every two year)

Abuse

What is considered abuse?

A physical or emotional act that causes harm or distress to another. The act can be either intentional or unintentional, involve doing something (e.g., hitting) or not doing something (e.g., not washing someone), be done on one occasion or repeated over several years.

Abuse may take many forms and be performed by many different people, be a spur of the moment act or a planned and prolonged assault on a person, so there are many reasons why it can happen. Factors that can contribute to abuse:

- Break down of long-term relationships
- Inability to provide the level of care required
- Violent relationship
- Failing health of the carer
- Lack of support for the carer
- Inadequate training
- Poor supervision
- Lack of support
- Working alone
- Stress, leading to impatience, frustration, and anger

If a person is not suited to providing care, they can easily become stressed, suffer depression or ill health, which may be contributing factors

that lead to abuse. Lack of adequate training can sometimes lead to unintentional neglect.

Where can a person be abused?

Abuse can happen anywhere! It often occurs in the person's home and can also happen in a residential, care or nursing home or hospital.

Who abuses people?

Abusers can be anyone. They may be a stranger or may be known to, and trusted by, the person being abused. They are usually in a position of trust and power.

In care facilities the abusers could include employees, doctors, lawyers, bankers, accountants, clergy, or intruders and anyone associated with the person such as friends or relatives - anyone who comes into contact with the person.

Who can be abused?

Anyone, regardless of age, disability or need, religion, gender, economic background orientation can be abused. Some groups, such as vulnerable adults or children may however be more at risk.

What should I do if I suspect abuse?

BREAK THE SILENCE AND REPORT IT!

Sounds simple enough but many professional care workers find discussing abuse with the people in their care or even reporting abuse to the appropriate authorities, very difficult to do. A lack of training, heavy workloads, the fear of being confronted by the abuser, or just being wrong are often put forward as reasons why they may not report abuse.

It is acknowledged that identifying the abuse of someone with dementia is not easy. People with dementia can behave in ways that are not normal to others or even themselves. They may make irrational claims, suffer injuries from falls and require physical assistance to do things and even physical restraint to protect them from their own actions. So, it can be difficult to identify what is and what is not abuse.

If you think someone is in immediate danger you need to do something straight away to stop them from being hurt. You should telephone: **999 and tell the operator what is happening.**

If someone is not in immediate danger you should report your concerns to one of the Safeguarding and Prevent Officers:

Becca McDonald (LSPO)

Owen Muir (DSPO)

safeguarding@release-potential.co.uk

As a rule of thumb all concerns about:

- Criminal forms (e.g., assault, theft) of abuse will be referred to the police and social services
- The collection or use of social security services will be reported to Jobcentre Plus or The Pension Service (if over 60)
- Power of attorney abuses will be reported to the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG)
- Care standard not meeting minimum requirements will be reported to social services and possibly the Care Quality Commission
- Concerns about the healthcare or treatment within the NHS will be reported to the managers of the service

How can a person be abused?

People can be abused in many different ways. The abuse can involve one type of act or a combination of several different acts. There is a full description of the forms of abuse you might encounter on P.25-28 to familiarise yourself with.

What should I be looking for?

You should be aware of changes in personality or behaviour of the person. They may become more argumentative, tense or they may become more withdrawn and less talkative. It is not always easy to spot one particular sign and be sure that abuse has taken or is taking place, but it may be easier to spot several signs that may alert you to the need for further investigation. You may also look for a caregiver's refusal to allow visitors to see the person alone.

Anything else?

It is possible that a person may be suffering from self-neglect or self-abuse. The following are some of the signs of self-neglect you should be looking out for:

- Dehydration or malnutrition
- Weakness
- Poor personal hygiene
- Foul household odour
- Human or animal faeces and urine in the house
- Medical conditions left untreated
- Missing or broken medical aids such as hearing aids, glasses or dentures
- Lack of heating
- Inadequate clothing for the climate

If you notice any of these symptoms and suspect the person has 'given up' or is likely to endanger him or herself due to neglect, you should seek advice and support from the Safeguarding team.

Confidentiality, is this just keeping secrets?

Confidentiality simply means that where information is given in confidence there is a general duty not to disclose that information without the person's consent, or other lawful authority such as a court order. This duty applies to living persons and continues after the person's death. The duty of confidentiality is supported by the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Data Protection Act 1988.

There may be occasions, such as where there is a safeguarding concern, where information

should be disclosed, for example to prevent a crime or risk to health or life. The person disclosing information should be made aware of this duty and permission sought for disclosure where appropriate. Remember disclosure may not always be appropriate, particularly if the disclosure may put the person at a greater risk of harm.

Effective safeguarding needs a degree of information sharing between relevant staff and outside agencies. In line with Caldicott principles the following guidelines should be applied when confidential information needs to be disclosed in the interests of an adult:

- Information can only be shared on a 'need to know' basis when it is in the interests of the person
- Confidentiality must not be confused with secrecy
- Informed consent must be obtained but, if this is not possible and other adults are at risk, it may be necessary to override this
- It is inappropriate for agencies to give assurances of absolute confidentiality in cases where there are concerns about abuse, particularly in those situations when other people may be at risk

The need for information sharing does not override obligations under the Data Protection Act, the Human Rights Act or the principle that consent to disclosure should be sought.

It does mean, however, that any disclosure must be justified either by consent, in public

interest (disclosure required to prevent a crime or risk of serious harm to the adult and/or other who is the subject of safeguarding), or to comply with a statutory obligation (e.g., the disclosure of confidential information and information sharing where it is in the interests of reducing crime and disorder).

Care must be taken, and risks evaluated where information needs to be shared with family members/carers and consent should be sought. Not all carers of family members have the person's best interests at heart (e.g., adult concerned is at risk of being forced to enter a marriage) and disclosure may cause a person to be at greater risk of abuse or harm.

What if it's one of us?

If an allegation is raised, there is a need to react and address it. If there was reasonable belief it would be appropriate to take reasonable action. This would potentially constitute a disciplinary situation. As an organisation Release Potential Ltd would investigate as much as reasonably possible. This could be in parallel with a Police investigation, for example, if it was deemed appropriate.

Should an employee leave during a safeguarding investigation, this would still continue to its conclusion as though the staff member concerned were still in employment, but with the involvement of other organisations including the police.

If the concern or allegation involves a member of staff, you should contact either of the Safeguarding and Prevent Officers:

Becca McDonald (LSPO)

Owen Muir (DSPO)

safeguarding@release-potential.co.uk

If the concern is about either of them, the Finance Director, should be informed:

Hugh Hutchinson

If the concern is about any of the Directors of Release Potential, the Local Authority Designated Officer for Northumberland County Council should be contacted on:

Onecall: 01670 536 400

Text phone: 01670 536 844

Email:

safeguardingreferrals@northumberland.gov.uk

Please refer to the flow chart on P.31 of this handbook.

How are records maintained and stored?

Clear records must be kept and held securely in a file detailing the case, those individuals and agencies with whom information has been shared and the nature of this information.

Where individual members of staff have kept personal notes about a person these must be passed to the Safeguarding team. The LSPO will transfer the information to the case file.

All safeguarding records/information concerning issues with a particular person should be collated and stored securely in a file separate from any other recorded information.

All files should be stored securely with access limited to the Safeguarding team or where requested for specific concerns or disciplinary action.

Each file should begin with either a completed Safeguarding Alert Form (**Appendix 1**), or email log form detailing basic information on the person together with the contents of the file and should be updated after each new entry.

All records must be kept up to date. Where staff have made written notes, they should be completed in black ink, legible, signed and dated appropriately. These will be scanned by the Safeguarding team and held electronically.

Are there any outside organisations that need to know?

It very much depends upon the issue raised, but yes there are several agencies that might have to be contacted or may contact those involved. These might include one or more of the following:

- Adult Social Care Services
- NCC Designated Officer (LADO)
- NHS (possibly Care Trusts)
- The Police

You can find your local Adult Health Care service by accessing:

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/>

and using your postcode.

When do I find out about safeguarding?

You will receive basic information at your induction about the concepts of safeguarding and abuse, what to do about it and who to report it to. This handbook is designed to help support you in this area.

Safeguarding is a standing agenda item at staff meetings. However, you should not wait until one of these meetings to raise concerns. Do this at your earliest opportunity. You should not use an open meeting forum to raise or discuss details of new or ongoing cases of abuse.

You can find help and information by accessing the NHS Safeguarding app which is designed to support frontline staff and citizens with 24-hour, mobile access to up-to-date safeguarding guidance and local contacts to report safeguarding concerns. Install on your mobile device from:

Apple App Store;

<https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/nhssafeguarding-guide/id1112091419>

Google Play Store;

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.antbits.nhsSafeguardingGuide>

It provides an overview of necessary legislation and guidance covering children and adults safeguarding as well as an NHS staff guide. It contains regional contact information on

reporting a safeguarding concern, as well as links to national bodies and for healthcare staff to have a one stop sign posting and safeguarding information.

What about training?

All staff must receive training regularly as and when required. The LSPO and DSPO will attend a recognised training course at least once every two years. A record of such training will be kept.

All staff must also undergo linked iHasco training packages and will receive a detailed training update each year via the Safeguarding Officers.

Prevent

What is Prevent?

Prevent is part of the Government's overall counter-terrorism strategy CONTEST, led by the Home Office. Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales and the Security Act 2015 places a need to have due regard in preventing people from being drawn into terrorism. Prevent focuses on working with individuals and communities who may be vulnerable to the exploitation of violent extremists and terrorists.

The Prevent strategy seeks to:

- Respond to the threat we face from those who promote and conduct terrorist activities.
- Provide practical help to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.
- Work with a wide range of sectors and institutions (including education, criminal justice, faith, charities, the Internet, and health) where there are risks of radicalisation that need to be addressed.

The Prevent Strategy identifies that young people are more likely to be vulnerable to violent extremist or terrorist narratives.

What is CONTEST?

The CONTEST strategy was created to protect the UK from international terrorism and is led by the Office for Security and Counter Terrorism at

the Home Office. There are four programmes to the strategy:

- **Pursue:** stop terrorist attacks
- **Prevent:** stop people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremism
- **Protect:** strengthen our overall protection against terrorist attacks
- **Prepare:** where we cannot stop an attack, to mitigate its impact.

What is Extremism?

The Government has defined extremism as '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. We also include in our definition of extremism, calls for the death of members of our armed forces.' (Prevent Strategy HM Government UK).

What is radicalisation?

Radicalisation is the process through which a person comes to support or be involved in extremist ideologies. It can result in a person being drawn into terrorism. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. It can happen in many different ways and settings. Radicalisation is the process where someone

has their vulnerabilities or susceptibilities exploited towards crime or terrorism – most often by a third party, who have their own agenda, who have attempted to radicalise vulnerable children, young people and vulnerable adults to hold extreme views justifying political, religious, sexist or racist violence or steer them into a rigid and narrow ideology that is intolerant of diversity and leaves them vulnerable to future radicalisation.

British Values

RPL promote British Values with learners throughout their programme of study to prepare learners for work in modern Britain. The four fundamental British Values are:

- **Rule of Law:** The need for rules to make a happy, safe and secure environment to live and work
- **Individual Liberty:** Protection of your rights and the rights of others you work with
- **Democracy:** A culture built upon freedom and equality, where everyone is aware of their rights and responsibilities
- **Respect and 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

What does a terrorist look like?

You or me! There is no single indicator that a person is likely to become involved in terrorism, but these are some indicators that should help:

- A change in a person's demeanour or appearance
- Possession of suspicious items
- Accessing extremist web sites
- Unusual activity or behaviour
- Exposed to extreme views
- Bullying
- Influence from other people/peer pressure
- Personal or political grievances
- Race/hate crime

What makes someone more at risk of being radicalised?

The following factors may make vulnerable individuals susceptible to exploitation:

- Mental illness
- Disconnection from the community
- Involvement with offending and antisocial behaviour
- Significant tensions within the family
- Alienated from culture
- Unemployment
- Lack of self-esteem or identity

Release Potential Ltd has a part to play in fostering shared values and promoting cohesion. Release Potential Ltd will focus on the risks of violence and extremism that can and do manifest themselves within the workplace and training settings. This strategy has five key objectives:

- Promotion and reinforcement of shared values
- Breaking down segregation
- Ensuring learner safety
- Providing support for at risk learners

- Raising awareness of how to prevent violent extremism

Procedures for referrals

Although serious incidents involving radicalisation are not common in our region it is important that vigilance is maintained and that staff suspend disbelief that instances of radicalisation could not happen here and to be alert at all times. Where concerns arise they should be referred through the appropriate channels. Early intervention is vital.

Any instances that staff consider might indicate a person is being radicalised or is heading towards radicalisation should be reported to the Safeguarding and Prevent Officer who will deal swiftly with any referrals made. A determination of the most appropriate course of action on a case-by-case basis and will be made including when referral to external agencies is needed. If deemed necessary, serious incidents will be referred to:

Email:

prevent.channel@northumberland.gov.uk

Telephone: 101

In the event of the situation out pacing this policy please telephone the Anti-Terrorist Hotline:

0800 789 321

What are threat levels?

A system of threat level has been created which represents the likelihood of an attack in the near future. The five levels of attack are:

- **Critical:** expected imminently
- **Severe:** highly likely
- **Substantial:** strong possibility
- **Moderate:** possible but not likely
- **Low:** unlikely

The current threat level from international terrorism in the UK can be found at the link below. There is a different level for attacks in England and Northern Ireland from terrorists based in the Province.

The levels change infrequently as can be seen on this web site:

<https://www.mi5.gov.uk/threat-levels>

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

What is FGM?

FGM, Female Genital Mutilation, is a form of child abuse and violence against women. It is a procedure where the female genital organs are injured or changed, including partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for nonmedical reasons.

FGM is illegal in the UK. It is also illegal to take abroad a British national or permanent resident for FGM, or to help someone trying to do this. It is a violent act for the victim and can cause harm in many ways. The age at which FGM is carried out varies enormously according to the community in which it is practised. The procedure may be carried out shortly after birth, during childhood or adolescence, just before marriage or during a woman's first pregnancy.

It can be associated with other behaviours that discriminate against, limit or harm women and girls. These may include other forms of honour based violence such as forced marriage and domestic abuse. A 2015 study reported that no local authority area in England and Wales is likely to be free from FGM entirely.

Specific Concerns

Mandatory reporting of FGM

The FGM Act 2003 contains a mandatory reporting duty which came into force in October 2015 requiring regulated Health and Social Care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to report 'known' cases of FGM in under 18's which they identify in the course of their professional work to the police by contacting:

101

For teachers, 'known' cases include those where a girl informs the person that an act of FGM – however described – has been carried out on her. Mandatory reporting does not apply to teachers in Further Education colleges in England. Release Potential Ltd expects safeguarding reporting procedures to be followed when you know or have reason to suspect that a girl has undergone or is at risk of FGM.

If there's immediate danger

Contact the police if you or someone you know is in immediate danger of FGM telephone:

999 (emergency) or 101 (non-emergency)

You should also contact the Foreign and Commonwealth Office if you know a British national who has already been taken abroad for this purpose. Telephone:

020 7008 1500

If you or someone you know is at risk

Contact the NSPCC anonymously if you're worried that a girl or young woman is at risk or is a victim of FGM:

NSPCC FGM Helpline

Email: fgmhelp@nspcc.org.uk

Telephone: 0800 028 3550

Forced Marriage

Forced marriage is defined as a marriage conducted without the full consent of both parties and where duress is a factor. Abuse may be used, to force them to do so. It is recognised in the UK as a form of domestic or child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 made it a criminal offence in England, Wales and Scotland to force someone to marry. The pressure put on people to marry against their will may be: physical – e.g., threats, physical violence or sexual violence, emotional and psychological – e.g. making someone feel like they are bringing 'shame' on their family. Financial abuse, such as taking someone's wages, may also be a factor.

The Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) is a joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Home Office unit which leads on the government's forced marriage policy.

The FMU operates a public helpline to provide advice and support to victims of forced marriage as well as to professionals dealing with cases. The assistance provided ranges from safety advice, through to helping a forced marriage victim prevent their unwanted spouse moving to the UK.

FMU contact details:

telephone: +44 (0) 20 7008 0151

email: fmu@fco.gov.uk

Forced Marriage cases can involve a variety of complex and sensitive issues that should be handled by a child protection or adult protection specialist.

Upskirting

Upskirting typically involves someone taking a picture under another person's clothing without their knowledge, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks (with or without underwear). It can take place in a range of places. Anyone can be a victim.

It is a criminal offence in England and Wales. The Voyeurism (Offences) Act, which was commonly known as the Upskirting Bill, was introduced in June 2018 and came into force on 12 April 2019. Perpetrators can face two years in prison.

By criminalising this distressing practice it is hoped that it deters people from committing the crime. Upskirting, where committed to obtain sexual gratification, can result in the most serious offenders being placed on the sex offender register.

Sexting

Sexting is the sending and receiving of naked pictures or 'nudes', sexual or rude text messages or videos. It may also be called cybersex. This could be via mobile phones, social networks, emails or social apps such as Facebook or Snapchat. Once a message or image has been shared, the sender has no control about how it is used.

Sexting can leave a person vulnerable to bullying, blackmail, online grooming or abuse. When you're under 18 it is against the law to send nudes or sexual videos. It is also against the law for anyone to save or share a nude or sexual video. Even if it is a selfie or they're under 18 too.

Sexting between adults is legal. But it's against the law to send a nude or any kind of sexual image or video to someone under 18. Asking for or viewing sexual images of someone who is under 18 is a crime. It is also against the law to send a nude or video of someone who was under 18 at the time but is an adult now.

Self-Harm

Self-harm is when somebody intentionally damages or injures their body. It's usually a

way of coping with or expressing overwhelming emotional distress. It can include:

- cutting
- burning
- bruising
- poisoning

When someone self-harms the intention is often to punish themselves, express distress, or relieve unbearable tension - sometimes a mixture of all three. Self-harm can also be a cry for help. More than half of people who die by suicide have a history of self-harm.

Referrals can be made to GP, healthcare professionals at a local community mental health service for assessment to work out a plan to help with someone's distress.

Emergencies must be dealt with by contacting the emergency services using 999.

Treatment for people who self-harm usually involves seeing a therapist to discuss thoughts and feelings, and how these affect behaviour and wellbeing. Support and advice for people who self-harm, their families and friends is available from:

Mind

Telephone; 0300 123 3393

Text; 86463 (9am to 6pm on weekdays)

Samaritans

Telephone; call 116 123 (open 24 hours a day)

Email - jo@samaritans.org

Weapons

It is important for all learners and staff to feel safe.

The Offensive Weapons Act 2019 makes it an offence for anyone to be in possession of a weapon on further education premises.

Offensive weapons include knives, guns, adapted weapons such as broken bottles, and those not made or adapted such as a hammer or a corrosive substance, but intended by a person to cause injury to another.

The threat of violence is also an offence.

Knife crime has steadily risen in recent times, with the common denominator of learners found to be carrying bladed objects being their vulnerability, with almost all having experienced poverty, abuse, neglect or living with troubled families.

Call the police using:

Telephone: **999** in an emergency

to report a crime that is in progress or if someone is in immediate danger.

Any concerns should be raised as a safeguarding concern with one of our Designated Safeguarding Officers.

Email: safeguarding@release-potential.co.uk

Learners will receive a safeguarding information session while on their programme

with Release Potential which covers a wide range of safeguarding concerns.

Domestic Abuse

All employers have an important role to play in helping victims of domestic abuse to remain in work, in the workplace itself, and to help victims access the support they need through signposting to specialist services and raising awareness about domestic abuse.

As an employer, Release Potential Ltd has a duty of care towards employees experiencing domestic abuse.

It is hoped that a colleague experiencing difficulties of this nature would feel comfortable to raise it confidentially at work with someone they trust. Colleagues and Managers may be the only people outside the home a victim talks to so can be well placed to help spot signs of abuse, such as those outlined on P.25-28 of this handbook.

Domestic abuse is not just physical or sexual violence, but can be emotional, controlling or coercive, and economic abuse.

Practical support can be arranged when needed such as access to unplanned leave or flexible working arrangements, for example to manage appointments related to domestic abuse.

As with any immediate danger or emergency, the police should be called.

Concerns should be raised as a safeguarding concern with one of our Designated Safeguarding Officers.

Signposting, confidential advice and support are available for individuals from:

Refuge's National Domestic Abuse

Hotline:

<https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0808 200 0247

Men's Advice Line:

<https://mensadvice.org.uk/>

Telephone: 0808 801 0327

Ask for 'ANI' codeword

For anyone experiencing domestic abuse and in need of immediate help, ask for ANI (Action Needed Immediately) in participating pharmacies and jobcentres.

When you ask for ANI, a private space will be offered, a phone, and if you need support from the police or other domestic abuse support services. Your nearest participating provider can be found using the postcode checker:

[Ask for ANI postcode checker | ENOUGH](#)

The **Bright Sky app** is a mobile app and website for anyone experiencing domestic abuse, or who is worried about someone else:

[Bright Sky app | Hestia](#)

Employer support is accessible from **Hestia**:

[Respond To Abuse](#)

Telephone: 0203 879 3695

Email: Adviceline.EB@hestia.org

Through the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, Any victim is encouraged to come forward and report their experience, safe in the knowledge that the justice system and other agencies will do everything they can to protect them and their children and pursue their abuser.

Linked Policies

A Wider View

Release Potential Ltd acknowledge that Safeguarding and Prevent form just part of a much wider set of documents that help to protect the vulnerable in our society. To this end this policy will reference other key policies, processes and procedures and it is expected that this policy will not be used in isolation.

These documents will be referenced at the end of this document along with any guidance that is required for the successful implementation of holistic safeguarding.

It is essential that this handbook is not taken in isolation. Safeguarding includes, but is not limited to, health & safety, malpractice, whistle blowing, equality, diversity and inclusion or any other policy listed here. Make sure you are familiar with and can reference these policies and procedures whenever necessary for more detailed guidance.

Personal & Professional Boundaries Policy

This policy provides staff with guidance on what is acceptable and what is not within safeguarding areas including sexual relationships, substance use, gifting, confidentiality, abuse of position of trust, and

physical contact. We would also expect partners to apply a similar policy and therefore these areas may be examples of concern when visiting other organisations.

Staff Disclosure and Barring checks Policy

Provides policy on criminal conviction disclosure within Release Potential Ltd and the current requirements for DBS checking at normal and enhanced levels within support, operations and regulated activities.

Malpractice and Maladministration Policy

Sets the level of acceptable practice within teaching and learning. Looks at safeguarding in terms of false information and evidence, offensive behaviours, and honesty. Vulnerable people may be open to carrying out actions or agree to things they may not normally agree to.

Anti-bribery Policy

Sets our expectations in terms of accepting gifts, loans, payments etc outside of normal payment systems within the company. Helps us safeguard our learners from financial harm.

Learner Charter

Sets early expectation and begins to set standards within the learning period and the

relationship between Release Potential Ltd and our learners.

EDI Policy

Linked to protected characteristics, our EDI policy sets minimum expectations of how we expect our staff, learners, visitors and partners to behave towards other people. Many people experience discrimination of one sort or another and we would always expect this to be challenged under our safeguarding policies.

County Lines Policy

Cuckooing, child exploitation and drug crime crossing into our areas of operation. These areas are often levied against vulnerable people, and we therefore need to be vigilant to the signs and measures we need to take to protect our learners and others.

Health & Safety Policy

First aid, general health, safety and welfare. Poor health and safety can often be an indicator of more deep-seated issues within a workplace. Expecting a vulnerable person to work at height without protection is as much a safeguarding issue as other forms of abuse.

Staff Lone Working Policy

Our lone working policy is there to protect both staff and learners.

Digital Safety Policy

Online safety is an increasing concern throughout society. Email scams, phishing, sexting, revenge porn, viruses, key logging and fake web sites are just some examples of how

vulnerable people can be abused online (or off in the case of telephone scams). Familiarisation with this policy and guidance and the Acceptable Use Policy for IT Systems is essential throughout Release Potential Ltd and its partners. Our ICT Manager uses Bitdefender to log if any learners have tried to access websites or links that are offensive or potential safeguarding concerns. Any learners using laptops in classroom settings, or who loan a laptop, have the device number logged, which allows for quick identification.

Safer Recruitment and Selection Policy

Understanding a potential employee's full work history and understanding of safeguarding allows us to plan and maximise staff support and development. This policy sets our ground rules on keeping you and our most vulnerable learners safe.

Modern Slavery Policy

The world is getting smaller, and we find out about exploitation and abuse of trafficked people often with tragic consequences. We feel our statement on this is essential in the work we do and expect our staff to include this area within our safeguarding ethos.

Whistle Blowing Policy

It is vital everyone involved with the company feels able to raise concerns and feel protected. Our senior management remain committed to managing an effective business and expect all moral, legal and other issues to be brought to their attention. People raising concerns will receive protection under this policy.

SCIE Types and Signs of Abuse

Types of abuse

Neglect (the most common form of abuse)

- Refusal or failure to provide or pay for the necessities of life, such as food, water, shelter, clothing, healthcare, medicine, comfort, and safety
- Abandonment
- Lack of supervision and monitoring
- Lack of assistance with eating or drinking
- Inappropriate clothing for the weather
- Denial or delay of medical care
- Inadequate help with hygiene (the person or the caregiver) or bathing
- Lack of help in moving around or accessing the toilet
- Not providing clean changes of clothes or sanitary wear

Financial

- Cashing cheques
- Using a charge or ATM card
- Stealing household goods, money, pension payments
- Convincing a person to withdraw money from the bank or sign a contract
- Identity theft

- Forging signatures
- Altering a will
- Giving incorrect change
- Overcharging

Psychological (verbal, mental, emotional)

- Ignoring moans or calls for help
- Lack of affection
- Isolation by restricting phone calls, mail, visitors, and outings
- Not providing stimulating activities
- Ignoring, isolating, blaming
- Intimidation, name-calling, cursing, humiliating, insulting, or ridiculing
- Threatening to punish or withhold
- Treating the person like a child
- Yelling or screaming

Physical

- Applied force resulting in injury, impairment, or physical pain
- The threat of physical force
- Beating, whipping, hitting (with or without an object), slapping, or punching
- Pushing, shoving, shaking, choking, or throwing
- Kicking, pinching, biting, or scratching
- Spitting, force-feeding, hair pulling, or burning

- Inappropriate use of drugs and physical restraints
- Rough handling during care giving, moving the body, or administration of medicines

Sexual (e.g. sexual contact with a person without that person's consent)

- Coerced nudity
- Fondling, touching, or kissing, particularly the genitals
- Making the person fondle someone else's genitals
- Forcing the person to watch sex acts
- Photographing the person in sexually explicit ways
- Any type of sexual assault
- Showing the person pornographic material
- Watching the person in the bathroom or bedroom
- Telling "dirty" stories or making lewd suggestions

Signs of abuse

Neglect (the most common form of abuse)

- Dehydration or malnutrition
- Hazardous or unsafe living conditions (e.g. lack of heating)
- Unsanitary and unclean living conditions (e.g. dirty bedding or smell of urine)
- Inadequate clothing for the weather
- Being dirty or not bathed
- Unusual weight loss
- Untreated health or medical problems
- Person being taken to a location and left
- Signs of being restrained, such as rope marks
- Muscle stiffness
- A person reporting being mistreated or abandoned

Financial

- Unexplained cash withdrawals
- Numerous withdrawals in round amounts (e.g. £100)
- Cheques written to unusual recipients
- Missing objects, money, credit cards, savings books
- Abrupt changes in or creation of wills, trusts, power of attorney, durable power of attorney (continues after incapacitation), property titles, deeds, or mortgages
- Changes in beneficiaries on insurance policies
- Sudden changes in the person's financial situation
- Care that is lacking, despite sufficient

funds

- Forged signatures
- Unnecessary services, goods, or subscriptions
- Sudden close relationships with others
- Interest in the person's financial matters on the part of a friend, relative or care contact
- Reluctance to discuss financial matters
- Contact with person refused by friend or relative
- A person reporting financial exploitation or material theft
- Preferential treatment of those of a particular race

Psychological (verbal, mental, emotional)

- Upset or agitated
- Lack of interest, withdrawal, depression, non-communication
- Sucking, biting, or rocking (behaviour often attributed to dementia)
- Caregiver behaviours such as belittling, threats, or other powerful or controlling behaviour
- A person reporting being verbally or emotionally mistreated

Physical

- Unexplained cuts, lacerations, puncture wounds, open wounds, bruises, welts, discolouration, black eyes, burns, bite marks
- Bone fractures, broken bones, and skull fractures, sprains or dislocations
- Untreated or not properly treated injuries

- Poor skin condition or poor skin hygiene
- Dehydration and/or malnourished
- Loss of weight
- Soiled clothing or bed
- Broken spectacles, physical signs of being subjected to punishment, or restraint
- Overdosing or under-dosing of medication
- Similar injuries on both sides of the body
- Signs of being restrained, such as rope marks
- A person reporting they have been hit, slapped, kicked, or mistreated.

Sexual (e.g. sexual contact with a person without that person's consent)

- Bruises around breasts, genitals, inside legs
- Unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding
- Torn, stained, or bloody underwear
- A person reporting being sexually assaulted

SCIE – Social Care Institute for Excellence

Types of Bullying

In order to be considered bullying, the behaviour must be aggressive and include:

- A power imbalance: happen more than once or when those who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviours have the potential to happen more than once.

There are three types of bullying:

- Verbal bullying is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:
 - Teasing
 - Name-calling
 - Inappropriate sexual comments
 - Taunting
 - Threatening to cause harm
- Social bullying, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone's reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:
 - Leaving someone out on purpose

Types and Signs of Bullying

- Telling others not to be friends with someone
- Spreading rumours about someone
- Embarrassing someone in public
- Physical bullying involves hurting a person's body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:
 - Hitting/kicking/pinching
 - Spitting
 - Tripping/pushing
 - Taking or breaking someone's things
 - Making mean or rude hand gestures

What Is Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like mobile phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content.

Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about

someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behaviour. The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are:

- Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter
- SMS (Short Message Service) also known as Text Message sent through devices
- Instant Message (via devices, email provider services, apps, and social media messaging features)
- Email

Special Concerns

With the prevalence of social media and digital forums, comments, photos, posts, and content shared by individuals can often be viewed by strangers as well as acquaintances. The content an individual shares online – both their personal content as well as any negative, mean, or hurtful content – creates a kind of permanent public record of their views, activities, and behaviour.

This public record can be thought of as an online reputation, which may be accessible to schools, employers, colleges, clubs, and others who may be researching an individual now or in the future. Cyberbullying can harm the online reputations of everyone involved – not just the person being bullied, but those doing the bullying or participating in it.

Cyberbullying has unique concerns in that it can be:

- Persistent – Digital devices offer an ability to immediately and continuously communicate 24 hours a day, so it can be difficult for someone experiencing cyberbullying to find relief.
- Permanent – Most information communicated electronically is permanent and public, if not reported and removed. A negative online reputation, including for those who bully, can impact college admissions, employment, and other areas of life.
- Hard to Notice – it can be harder to notice and recognise cyberbullying taking place as it may not be seen or overheard.

Suspected Safeguarding Issues

Suspected issue involving a member of staff

In the rare event that there is suspicion of harm to a child, young person or vulnerable adult by a member of Release Potential Ltd staff, you should contact either of the Safeguarding and Prevent Officers:

Becca McDonald (LSPO)
Owen Muir (DSPO)
safeguarding@release-potential.co.uk

If the concern is about either of them, the Finance Director, should be contacted:

Hugh Hutchinson

If the concern is about any of the Directors of Release Potential, the Local Authority Designated Officer for Northumberland County Council should be contacted on:

Onecall: 01670 536 400
Text phone: 01670 536 844
Email:
safeguardingreferrals@northumberland.gov.uk

Please refer to the flow chart on P.31 of this handbook.

Suspected issue involving another learner

Any form of harm from one learner to another including inappropriate behaviour of any kind will be dealt with under the Release Potential Ltd learner disciplinary policy.

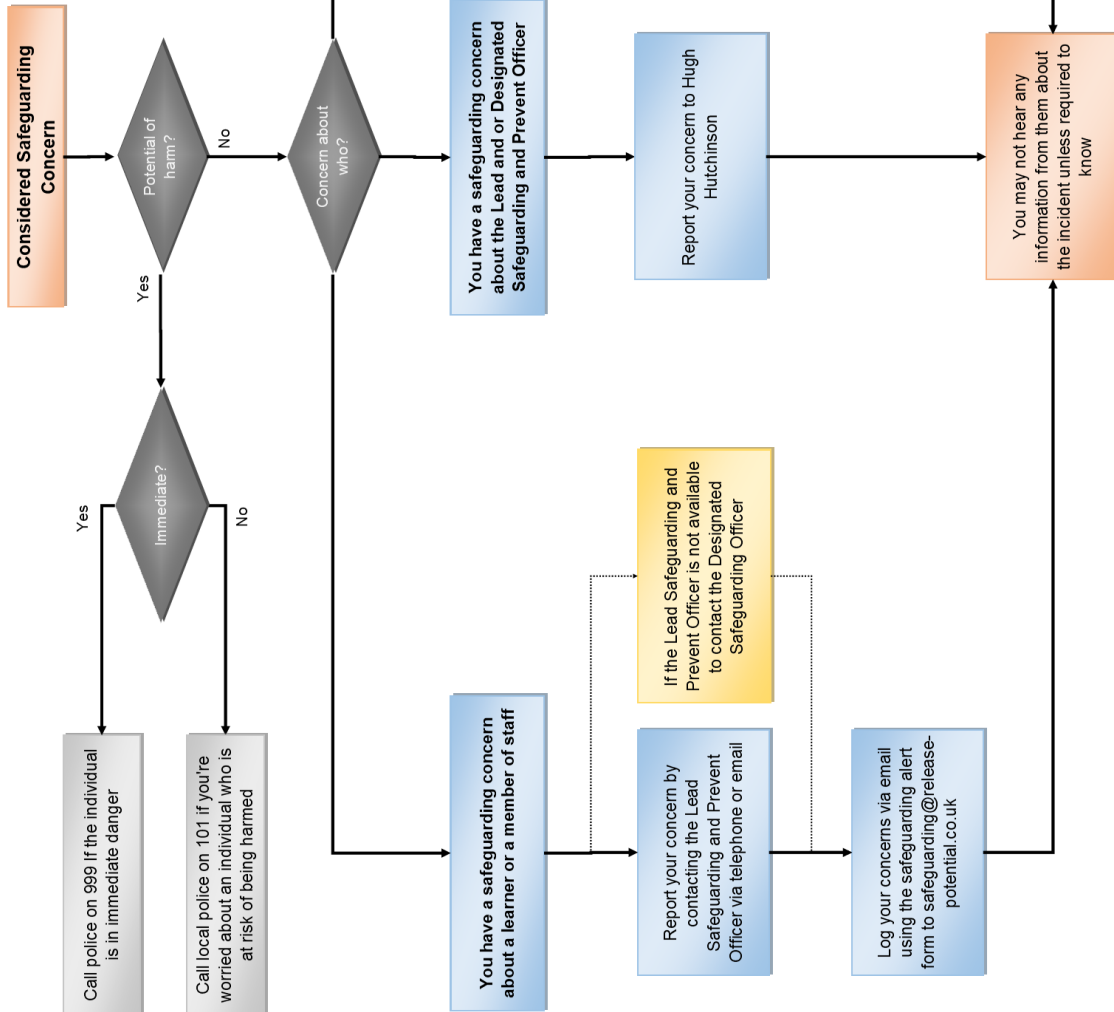
This will not however supersede the safeguarding requirements placed upon Release Potential Ltd and its staff under this Policy.

Suspected issue involving another person

All allegations or suspicions of harm must be taken seriously. Staff are expected to respond sensitively to anyone who confides in them and recognise the courage or level of potential desperation it takes to share painful and personal concerns This policy and associated procedures must be followed where a safeguarding concern is identified.

Remember: If in doubt, speak out

Safeguarding Concern Decision Tree



Additional General Definitions Within Safeguarding

Child/young person: The Children's Act 1989 defines a child or young person as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This definition is extended to any young person under 24 with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Vulnerable adult: Can be defined as anyone requiring additional support to complete everyday tasks. This can be due to learning difficulties, disabilities or where their needs, leaves them open to exploitation.

Domestic abuse: Domestic abuse is categorised by any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality.

Organisational or Institutional abuse: The mistreatment of people brought about by poor or inadequate care or support, or systematic poor practice that affects the whole care setting. It occurs when the individual's wishes and needs are sacrificed for the smooth running of a group, service or organisation.

Physical abuse: non-accidental infliction of physical force by one person on another, which may or may not result in physical injury.

Harm: The "ill treatment or the impairment of the health or development of a child, young person or vulnerable adult."

Staff: In the context of this handbook, staff refers to all Release Potential Ltd employees regardless of department and role.

Safeguarding Alert Form (Appendix 1)

Please complete and return to Becca McDonald (LSPO) or Richard Ingham (DSPO) using safeguarding@release-potential.co.uk, Release Potential Ltd's Safeguarding and Prevent Officers, if you suspect any incident, harm, suspected or actual abuse.

Your Details

Name: _____

Phone contact details: _____

Date of notification to Safeguarding and _____

Prevent Officer: _____

General Details

Date safeguarding concern took place: _____

Time safeguarding concern took place: _____

Address where safeguarding concern took
place _____

Name (if known) of affected party: _____

Name (if known) of other party/parties _____

Types of Abuse (please tick one or more)

Sexual	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neglect or omission	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emotional	<input type="checkbox"/>	Financial / Material	<input type="checkbox"/>
Psychological	<input type="checkbox"/>	Institutional	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discriminatory	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify below)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Description of reported safeguarding concern, detailing all people, including witnesses
(using affected persons own words):**

(Please give a detailed description and any other comments you feel are relevant. If necessary, attach further pages.)

Print Name: _____ Position: _____
Signed: _____ Date: _____

Action taken by Safeguarding and Prevent Officer

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Contact List

If you experience any issues please raise them in confidence with your tutor who will take all necessary steps to help you. You may want to contact any of the organisations listed below for help or information.

National Bullying Helpline	UK's anti-bullying website, offering information and advice to victims and their families	Information and advice about all forms of bullying (nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk)	0300 323 0169 Email: help@nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk
ChildLine	Available for anyone who has any concerns about a young person's welfare	Childline Childline	0800 1111
Cruse Bereavement Care	Charity offering support and counselling for people who have suffered a loss	www.cruse.org.uk	0808 808 1677 Email: info@cruse.org.uk helpline@cruse.org.uk
FRANK (National Drugs Helpline)	24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Free and confidential advice and information on drugs	www.talktofrank.com	0300 123 6600
Local Safeguarding Boards	Core remit of the LSCB's is to coordinate all the relevant local authorities, health bodies and police to ensure all are working effectively together	Local safeguarding children boards - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)	
MIND	UK mental health charity who work to improve the quality of life for people with mental health difficulties	Home - Mind	0300 123 3393 Text: 86463 Email: info@mind.org.uk
CAP – Christians Against Poverty	Specialises in offering free debt counselling. Individuals seeking the assistance of the charity give authority to the charity to negotiate with creditors, and the charity will then organise the individual's finances with the objective of making	www.capuk.org	01274 760 720 Email: info@capuk.org

	them debt free within 5 years		
National Centre for Domestic Violence	Specialises in helping victims of domestic violence obtain non molestation and other orders from court to protect them from further abuse	www.ncdv.org.uk	0800 970 2070 Email: office@ncdv.org.uk
NSPCC	Aim to protect children from cruelty, support vulnerable families, campaign for changes to the law and raise awareness about abuse	www.nspcc.org.uk	0808 800 5000 0800 1111 (18 years or under)
Northumberland County Council Contacts (Children)	The role of the LADO is set out in the HM Government guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (2010). This includes responsibilities, the allegation referral process, and contact details	Northumberland County Council - Safeguarding children - information for professionals	LADO: Louise Prudhoe Email: LADO@northumberland.gov.uk Telephone 01670 623979
Northumberland County Council Contacts (Adults)	To report a concern about a vulnerable adult who is at risk of neglect or abuse	Northumberland County Council - Safeguarding adults	Telephone 01670 536400 Textphone 01670 536844 Email: safeguardingreferrals@northumberland.gov.uk
Princes Trust	The UK's leading charity that helps young people overcome barriers and get their lives on track	www.princes-trust.org.uk	0800 842 842
Relate	Largest UK organisation that specialises in relationship counselling and support	www.relate.org.uk	0300 003 0396
Respond UK	Website created by people with learning difficulties in an easy to read and view format. They support people with learning difficulties who have been affected by trauma and abuse, their families, carers and professionals	www.respond.org.uk	020 7383 0700 Email: admin@respond.org.uk

The Samaritans	Charity offering 24 hours a day confidential support and advice to anyone in distress.	www.samaritans.org	116 123 Email: jo@samaritans.org.uk
Suzy Lamplugh Trust	Raise awareness of the importance of personal safety and to provide solutions that help people avoid violence and aggression so live safer lives	www.suzylamplugh.org	020 7091 0014 Email: info@suzylamplugh.org
Shelter	Helps people every year struggling with bad housing or homelessness through our advice, support, and legal services	www.shelter.org.uk	0808 800 4444
Streetwise	Works with under 25's to provide free, confidential, information, advice and support services	www.streetwisenorth.org.uk	0191 230 5400 Email: admin@streetwisenorth.org.uk
CALM – Campaign Against Living Miserably	Charity leading a movement against male suicide.	https://www.thecalmzone.net/	0800 585858
Hub of Hope	Mental health support database that brings together local, national, peer, community, charity, private and NHS mental health support services in one place	Mental Health Support Network provided by Chasing the Stigma Hub of hope	N/A