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A	Initial Issue

Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	3
1. Background	5
2. Purpose	5
3. Scope.....	5
4. Definitions.....	5
Safeguarding Children	6
Safeguarding Adults	6
Safeguarding Issues.....	6
Child on Child Abuse	7
5. Statement	8
6. Responsibilities	9
Deputy Safeguarding and Prevent Officer	10
All staff	11
Management.....	11
Directors.....	11
Safer Recruitment and Training for Staff	11
7. Bullying and Harassment	12
8. Procedure for Staff.....	13
Concerns regarding staff members conduct including suspicion or allegation of abuse	13
9. External Speakers/Visitors	14
10. Use of IT Equipment.....	14
11. Whistleblowing	14
12. Related Policies.....	14
13. Appendix A.....	15
Abuse	15
Physical abuse	15
Emotional abuse	15
Sexual abuse.....	15
Neglect	15
Bullying, including Cyberbullying: Bullying	16
Child Missing from Education	16
Child Criminal Exploitation.....	16
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	16
Child Trafficking and Modern Slavery Child Trafficking.....	17

Domestic Abuse	18
Honour Based Violence (HBV).....	18
Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)	18
Forced Marriage.....	19
Mental Health	19
Preventing Radicalisation.....	19
What is Extremism?	20
What is Radicalisation?	20
What is Channel?	21
Youth Produced Sexual Imagery (Sexting)	22
Handling Incidents	22
Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment	23
Sexual Violence	24
Rape 24	
Assault by Penetration	24
Sexual Assault.....	24
What is Consent?	24
Upskirting	25
14. Appendix B	25
Safeguarding External Contacts	26

1. Background

- 1..1. Optimum Skills are fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all our stakeholders and we do this by taking all reasonable steps to protect from harm.
- 1..2. As a workforce we have a duty to ensure British Values and Safeguard the welfare of all stakeholders by creating an environment that protects them from harm and reduces potential risks of being exposed to violence, extremism, exploitation, or victimisation
- 1..3. The following publications are considered throughout the policy:
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) – Department for Education, September (2023) [Keeping children safe in education 2023 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education-2023)
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children – Her Majesties Government, July (2018) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
 - The Care Act – Department of Health and Social Care (2014) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-statutory-guidance/care-and-supportstatutory-guidance>
 - The Prevent Duty – Department for Education June (2015) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-children-from-radicalisation-theprevent-duty>

2. Purpose

- 2..1. Optimum Skills have a statutory duty under Section 175 of the Education Act (2002) to have in place arrangements for carrying out duties with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults who may be at risk of harm or abuse.

3. Scope

- 3..1. The Safeguarding Policy applies to all staff and anyone who meets adults, children and young people within an Optimum Skills environment.
- 3..2. This policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of all individuals involved in providing a safe working and learning environment where everyone is protected from abuse.

4. Definitions

Safeguarding Children

- 4..1. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined in Keeping children Safe in Education (2023) as:
- Protecting children from maltreatment
 - Preventing impairment of children’s health or development
 - Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provisions of safe and effective care and
 - Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

Safeguarding Adults

- 4..1. An adult at risk of abuse or neglect is defined as someone who has needs for care and support, who is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect and because of their care needs - is unable to protect themselves. For the purposes of this policy, an adult is a person, aged 18 years and over who is at a greater risk of suffering abuse or neglect because of physical, mental, sensory, learning, or cognitive illnesses or disabilities; and substance misuse or brain injury.
- 4..2. The Care Act 2014 describes safeguarding as a means of protecting an adult’s right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. It further states that it is about people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult’s well-being is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action.

Safeguarding Issues

- 4..1. Safeguarding actions may be needed to protect learners from the following safeguarding issues and explanations and definitions can be found within Appendix A.
- Physical abuse
 - Emotional abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - Neglect
 - Bullying including Cyberbullying
 - Children and the Court System/Family Members in Prison
 - Children Missing from Education
 - Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
 - Child Trafficking and Modern Slavery
 - Child Criminal Exploitation - County Lines
 - Domestic Abuse

- Drugs
- Fabricated or Induced Illness
- Faith Abuse
- Gender-based Violence / Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)
- Honour Based Violence
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Forced Marriage
- Breast Ironing
- Mental Health
- Private Fostering
- Radicalisation
- Relationship Abuse
- Sexual Violence & Sexual Harassment
- Sexting (Youth Produced Sexual Imagery)
- Trafficking
- Upskirting
- Youth Violence

Child on Child Abuse

- 4..1. It is important to recognise that learners are capable of abusing their peers and be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. Child on child abuse is abuse young people may experience from their peers who are the same or a similar age and under the age of 18 years.
- 4..2. Child on child abuse can take various forms and can include the following safeguarding issues:
 - Bullying (including cyberbullying)
 - Child Sexual Exploitation
 - Gender-based Violence
 - Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals
 - Physical Abuse
 - Relationship Abuse
 - Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment
 - Sexting (Youth Produced Sexual Imagery)
 - Upskirting
 - Youth and Serious Youth Violence

-
- 4..3. Staff need to be aware that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up' and to recognise that there is a gendered nature of child-on-child abuse in that it is more likely that girls will be victims and boys the perpetrators
 - 4..4. We will take any concerns of this nature very seriously and concerns should be raised in the same way as any other concerns to the Safeguarding Team.
 - 4..5. For Adult Safeguarding, the Care Act 2014 sets out the different types and patterns of abuse and neglect for adults at risk as:
 - Physical Abuse
 - Psychological Abuse
 - Financial/Material Abuse
 - Sexual Abuse
 - Organisational Abuse
 - Neglect
 - Discriminatory Abuse
 - Domestic Violence
 - Modern Slavery
 - Self-Neglect

5. Statement

- 5..1. Optimum Skills are fully committed to safeguarding the welfare of all of our stakeholders and we do this by taking all reasonable steps to protect from harm.
- 5..2. The Safeguarding Policy applies to all staff, and anyone who comes into contact with adults, children and young people. As a workforce we have a duty to ensure British Values and Safeguard the welfare of all stakeholders by creating an environment that protects them from harm and reduces potential risks from being exposed to violence, extremism, exploitation or victimisation. Our policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of all individuals involved in providing a safe working and learning environment where everyone is protected from abuse.
- 5..3. It is our aim to:
 - Ensure that all stakeholders are protected from abuse, regardless of sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, gender reassignment, maternity, or because someone is married or in a civil partnership.
 - Ensure that staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding understanding and the risk of radicalisation, challenging extremism, their role in implementing the Prevent Duty and the impact this has on their job role, and how to refer an individual whom they feel is at risk.

- Ensure that appropriate supervision is given
- Take the necessary steps to inform all stakeholders of relevant policies and procedures.
- Regularly review and monitor our policies and procedures to ensure our legal, moral, and social responsibilities are met.
- Take all suspicions and allegations of abuse and risks of radicalisation extremely seriously and respond to concerns timely and diligently.
- Work in Partnership and in accordance with organisations' procedures, where required, including Designated Person/s in Local Authority, Safeguarding Partners, Safeguarding Adults Boards, and the Channel multi-agency panel.
- Comply with and maintain knowledge of all relevant legislation, codes of practice and appropriate guidance and any amendments.
- Have Designated Safeguarding and Prevent Officers (DSPOs) in place to advise on and manage any concerns and referrals made.
- Ensure that relevant employment and security checks are undertaken, as required.
- Ensure that all personal information is confidential and should only be shared with the permission of the individual concerned (and/or those with parental responsibility), unless the disclosure of confidential information is necessary to protect a child or adult at risk from serious harm or to promote their welfare. In circumstances, information must be confined to those people directly involved in the professional work of each individual child or adult at risk and on a strict "need to know" basis.

5.4. Signed



Diane Shakespeare (Managing Director), 01/09/2023

6. Responsibilities

- 6.1. Optimum Skills have appointed Designated Safeguarding and Prevent Officers to have responsibility for issues relating to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. These individuals are responsible for acting as a source of advice on all matters relating to safeguarding, coordinating action in relation to safeguarding and ensuring all optimum skills staff are up to date with current legislation and policy. These individuals are as follows:

Lead Designated Safeguarding & Prevent Officer	Stephanie Hudson – Head of Quality
Deputy Designated Safeguarding & Prevent Officer	Barbara Robson – Curriculum Support Lead

Safeguarding & Prevent Officer	Christine Gregory – Auditor
Safeguarding & Prevent Officer	Elisha Reilly – Apprenticeship Induction Coordinator
Safeguarding & Prevent Officer	Scott Lightfoot – Tutor
Safeguarding & Prevent Officer	Terri Williams – Head of Business Academies

Deputy Safeguarding and Prevent Officer

6..1. Will ensure that:

- Written records about a child/young person or adult at risk are retained securely on record. All such records will be stored confidentially and securely. This will be monitored and managed by the DSPO
- Ensure that all staff receive regular updates on child protection, adults at risk and safeguarding, and that they receive refresher training as required.
- They are the first point of contact for all staff to go to for advice if they are concerned about children, young persons and/or 'Adults at Risk'.
- They have a higher level of safeguarding training and knowledge than the other staff within the organisation.
- Safeguarding policy and procedures are kept up to date and regularly reviewed.
- Adherence to safer recruitment procedures for new staff members and support their induction.
- Assess information from staff regarding concerns about children, young people and/or 'Adults at Risk', make decisions about whether staff concerns are sufficient to notify First Contact or whether other courses of action are more appropriate.
- Concerns are logged and stored securely.
- For the promotion of a safe environment for children, young people and/or 'Adults at Risk';
- They know the contact details of relevant statutory agencies e.g. Local Authority Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for allegations against staff, Durham Constabulary for Prevent, anti-radicalisation issues etc
- That staff are aware of this policy and the associated procedures, identifying any appropriate training that staff may require
- That adequate staff training is provided and taken up and compliance is monitored and accurately recorded on an ongoing basis.

- 6..2. It is not the responsibility of the Designated Safeguarding Team to decide whether children, young people and/or 'Adults at Risk' have been abused or not, that is the responsibility of investigative statutory agencies such as DCSP, SAB or the police.

All staff

- 6..1. Have the responsibility to:
- Be aware of and implement our policy on Safeguarding Young People and Adults at Risk and Prevent Duty.
 - Promote a safeguarding ethos; provide a secure and supportive environment for all learners.
 - If they work with young people or adults at risk undertake staff development appropriate to their role.
 - In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) "Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people is everyone's responsibility. Everyone who meets young people, and their families and carers have a role to play in safeguarding young people. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child centred. This means they should consider, always, what is in the best interests of the young person".
 - All staff should be prepared to identify young people who may benefit from early help.

Management

- 6..1. Have the responsibility to:
- Embrace a holistic approach to promoting safeguarding and welfare of young people and adults at risk
 - Ensure staff are aware of the policy and procedure and they have been given appropriate training to undertake their roles effectively.
 - Ensure this policy and procedure is implemented in their departments.

Directors

- 6..1. Have the responsibility to:
- Oversee the implementation of this policy across Optimum Skills.

Safer Recruitment and Training for Staff

- 6..1. Optimum Skills will select and recruit in accordance with the statutory guidance set out in Part 3 of KCSIE (2023), which details Safer Recruitment pay attention to the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and the Protection of Freedom Act 2012. The recruitment policy and procedures ensure that all appropriate measures are applied in relation to everyone working for us, including staff, volunteers and staff employed. All heads of departments will ensure that a single central record is maintained of all pre-appointment checks. DBS checks are undertaken in line with government guidance and current

legislation, alongside appropriate references being obtained and ensuring qualifications are verified.

- 6..2. Newly appointed staff will have an induction in line with our probation policy over a 6-month period. We ensure that all employees are made aware of the standards expected of them and implement the appropriate support and training to achieve these standards. Employees will be made aware of the relevant Safeguarding and Prevent procedures as part of that induction program and will be given a copy of our Safeguarding Policy.

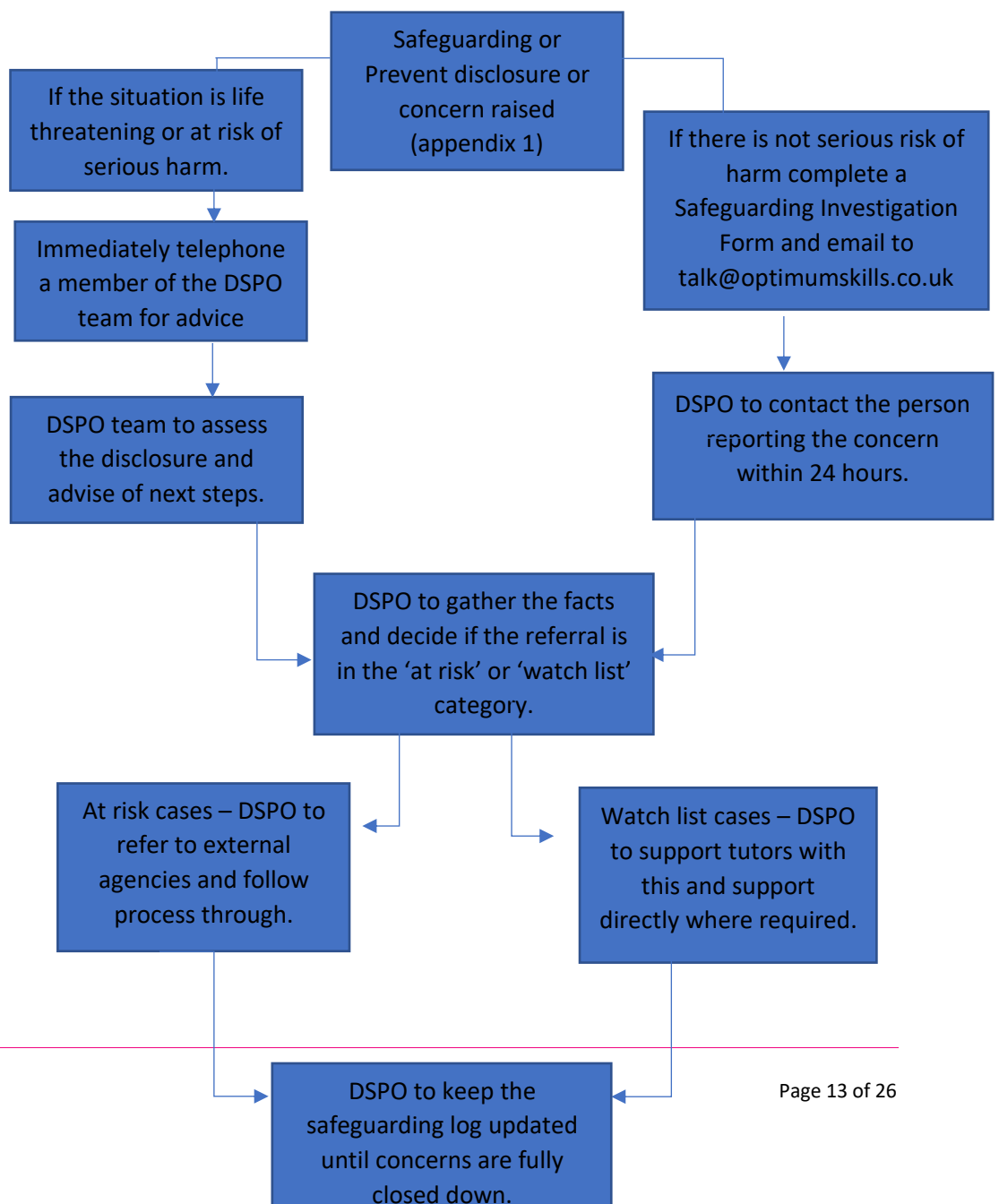
Individual / Group	Training	Frequency
All new staff and existing staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding • Prevent Duty • Anti-Counter Terrorism (Act) • Policies (internal and external) • Identified essential reading (KCFE part1) • Safer Recruitment Training (SMT) 	At induction and annual updating or at the time of changes
Safeguarding Leads (DSPO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified essential reading • Designated Safeguarding Officer Training • Specialism reading/training 	Updated in line with requirements
Governance Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance Safeguarding Training 	Annually

7. Bullying and Harassment

- 7..1. Bulling and harassment must be reported to the line manager and then overseen by the DSPO. The individuals involved must be separated where possible or appropriately supervised until the outcome of the complaint is resolved and agreed actions are taken. In the instance that the victim or perpetrator is under 18 the learner's guardians must be informed and kept aware of the actions taken to resolve the issue.
- 7..2. Police may be notified in instances of harassment with the consent of the guardian of the child or the adult affected. Efforts to resolve low-level bullying must be made by educating the learners on the consequences of bullying and the bully's personal circumstances must also be considered to understand the reason for their behaviour. Support must be offered to help the learner if they themselves are vulnerable or a victim of abuse. This would be in addition to an appropriate disciplinary relative to the nature of the bullying or harassment. All processes are outlined in the Bullying and Harassment Policy

8. Procedure for Staff

8..1.



Concerns regarding staff members conduct including suspicion or allegation of abuse

- 8..1. Any suspicion or allegation of abuse by a member of staff must be reported to one of the DSPOs who will communicate and report to HR for investigation. In addition, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Designated Officer who will conduct investigation under County Durham Safeguarding Board's procedures.

9. External Speakers/Visitors

- 9..1. If any member of staff wishes to invite an external speaker into any of the delivery sessions, they must complete and submit External Speaker form.
- 9..2. Vulnerable learners are NEVER left unsupervised with external visitors. If an agreement is made to allow external organisations or guest speakers to use the premises, appropriate checks will be made before agreeing to the contract. Usage will be monitored and in the event of any behaviour not in-keeping with the Prevent Policy, we will contact the police and terminate the agreement.

10. Use of IT Equipment

- 10..1. Our IT equipment including, laptops, mobile phones, computers, must not be used to view, download, create or share illegal content, this includes abusive images of children and young people. Internally we have a firewall which is in place to ensure that all of our equipment is used for the right reasons and any suspicious activity is flagged.

11. Whistleblowing

- 11..1. Whistleblowing is the disclosure of information which relates to suspected wrongdoing or dangers at work. To ensure that we uphold high standards and quality procedures we encourage a culture of openness and accountability which is essential to safeguard both employees and learners from coming to harm.
- 11..2. This policy should not be used for complaints relating to your own personal circumstances, such as the way you have been treated at work. In those cases, you should use the Grievance Procedure or Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy as appropriate.
- 11..3. Whistleblowing reports must be disclosed to your line manager or in the event that this isn't appropriate the employee must report the suspected wrongdoing or danger at work to the company Directors.

12. Related Policies

- 12..1. Bullying and Harassment
- 12..2. Health and Safety
- 12..3. Equality and Diversity
- 12..4. Whistleblowing
- 12..5. Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism

13. Appendix A

- 13..1. Staff should be aware that abuse, neglect, and safeguarding issues are rarely standalone events that can be covered by one definition or label. In most cases, multiple issues will overlap with one another

Abuse

- 13..1. A form of maltreatment of a child or vulnerable adult. Somebody may abuse or neglect by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. People may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse.

Physical abuse

- 13..1. This may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning, or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing physical harm.

Emotional abuse

- 13..1. Persistent emotional maltreatment to cause severe and adverse effects on a child or adult's emotional development. It may involve conveying to a child that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving someone an opportunity to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate

Sexual abuse

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

Neglect

- 13..1. The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. In the situation of a child, it could involve, a parent or carer failing to: provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate caregivers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may

also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Bullying, including Cyberbullying: Bullying

- 13..1. Defined as 'the persistent intentional harming of another person with an unequal power relationship'. (Bullying Intervention Group). Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either emotionally or physically. Bullying differs from banter because there is a deliberate intention to hurt or humiliate, there is an unequal power balance, and it is usually persistent or systematic.

Child Missing from Education

- 13..1. A young person going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Staff should follow procedures for dealing with learners that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage. Any concerns should be referred to a member of the Safeguarding Team.

Child Criminal Exploitation

- 13..1. County Lines Criminal exploitation of children is a geographically widespread form of harm that is a typical feature of county lines criminal activity: drug networks or gangs groom and exploit children and young people to carry drugs and money from urban areas to suburban and rural areas, market, and seaside towns. Key to identifying potential involvement in county lines are missing episodes when the victim may have been trafficked for the purpose of transporting drugs and a referral to the National Referral Mechanism should be considered.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

- 13..1. Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact: it can also occur using technology. Like all forms of child sex abuse, child sexual exploitation:
- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16- and 17-year-olds who can legally consent to have sex;
 - can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual.

- can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity.
- can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both.
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.
- may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (e.g. through others copying videos or images they have created and posted on social media);
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse; and
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources. Some of the following signs may be indicators of child sexual exploitation:
 - children who appear with unexplained gifts or new possessions.
 - children who associate with other young people involved in exploitation.
 - children who have older boyfriends or girlfriends.
 - children who suffer from sexually transmitted infections or become pregnant.
 - children who suffer from changes in emotional well-being.
 - children who misuse drugs and alcohol.
 - children who go missing for periods of time or regularly come home late; and
 - children who regularly miss school or education or do not take part in education

Child Trafficking and Modern Slavery Child Trafficking

- 13..1. Is child abuse. It is defined as recruiting, moving, receiving, and harbouring children for the purpose of exploitation. It is a criminal offence under Modern Slavery legislation. A child is any person under the age of 18, and children cannot consent to be exploited. Children can be trafficked into and out of the UK, and within the UK itself. They can be trafficked by parents, extended family members, known adults from a child's community or strangers. Trafficking often involves organised international networks of criminal gangs. Child trafficking is child abuse. It requires a child protection response and multi-

agency working, irrespective of the child's immigration status or whether they have engaged in criminal activity. Children can be exploited through:

- sexual exploitation
- criminal activity (e.g. cannabis cultivation, street crime, moving drugs, benefit fraud, immigration fraud)
- domestic servitude
- labour exploitation (e.g. restaurants, nail bars, agricultural work, factories)
- illegal adoption
- forced marriage
- unreported private fostering arrangements (for any of the above exploitative purposes).

Domestic Abuse

- 13..1. The cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse is: Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, 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. The abuse can encompass, but is not limited to:
- psychological
 - physical
 - sexual
 - financial
 - emotional
- 13..2. Exposure to domestic abuse and/or violence can have a serious, long-lasting emotional and psychological impact on children. In some cases, a child may blame themselves for the abuse or may have had to leave the family home as a result. Domestic abuse affecting young people can also occur within their personal relationships, as well as in the context of their home life.

Honour Based Violence (HBV)

- 13..1. So-called 'honour-based violence' encompasses crimes which have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or the community, including Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and practices such as breast ironing. All forms of so-called HBV are abuse (regardless of the motivation) and should be handled and escalated as such. If in any doubts, staff should speak to one of the Safeguarding Team.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- 13..1. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs. It is illegal in the UK and a form of child abuse with long-lasting

harmful consequences. Although the age of learners at Optimum Skills is such that they are not necessarily in the high-risk category for FGM, a student may disclose that she is at risk of FGM, has suffered FGM or that a sister or family member is at risk. Staff need to be alert to the possibility of a girl being at risk of FGM, or already having suffered FGM. The new mandatory reporting duty for FGM, introduced via the Serious Crime Act 2015, came into effect on 31 October 2015. This duty requires us to report known cases of FGM in under-18-year-olds to the police.

Forced Marriage

- 13..1. When someone is made to feel like they're bringing shame on their family). Financial abuse (taking wages or not giving money) can also be a factor. A lack of full and free consent can be where a person does not consent or where they cannot consent (if they have learning disabilities, for example). Nevertheless, some communities use religion and culture to coerce a person into marriage. An arranged marriage is not the same as a forced marriage. In an arranged marriage, the families take a leading role in choosing the marriage partner, but both parties are free to choose whether to enter the marriage or not.
- 13..2. Forcing a person into a marriage is a crime in England and Wales. A forced marriage is one entered without the full and free consent of one or both parties and where violence, threats or any other form of coercion is used to cause a person to enter a marriage. The pressure put on people to marry against their will can be physical (including threats, actual physical violence and sexual violence) or emotional and psychological (for example, Breast Ironing, also known as "Breast Flattening", is the process whereby young pubescent girls' breasts are ironed, massaged and/or pounded down through the use of hard or heated objects in order for the breasts to disappear or delay the development of the breasts entirely. It is believed that by carrying out this act, young girls will be protected from harassment, rape, abduction, and early forced marriage and therefore be kept in education. Much like Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Breast Ironing is a harmful cultural practice and is classified as physical abuse.

Mental Health

- 13..1. Mental health problems can include depression, anxiety, eating disorders, self-harm, suicidal tendencies and the potential risk of harming others. Staff will ensure the most appropriate support is provided to help learners with any difficulties they may be experiencing that could have a negative impact on their education life. Suicidal thoughts

Preventing Radicalisation

- 13..1. The Prevent Duty, introduced as part of the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015. Came into effect for key bodies including schools, health bodies and police on 1 July 2015. The duty commenced for higher and further education institutions on 18 September 2015. The aim of the Prevent Strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. In the Act, this has simply been expressed as the need to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn

into terrorism". This includes not just violent extremism but also non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists exploit. Learners are vulnerable to extremist ideology and radicalisation. Like protecting learners from other forms of harm and abuse, protecting them from this risk is part of our safeguarding approach. Where deemed appropriate, we will seek external support for learners through referrals to the Channel Programme. This programme aims to work with the individual to address their specific vulnerabilities and prevent them from becoming further radicalised. Where deemed appropriate, Optimum Skills will seek external support for learners through referrals to the Channel Programme. This programme aims to work with the individual to address their specific vulnerabilities and prevent them from becoming further radicalised.

What is Extremism?

- 13..1. Extremism is defined in the national Prevent Strategy as any 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. This also includes calling for the death of members of the armed forces. Prevent covers international and domestic terrorist threats, and includes the activities of far-right groups, and animal rights groups.

What is Radicalisation?

- 13..1. Radicalisation refers to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.
- 13..2. There is no single way of identifying whether a person is likely to be susceptible to an extremist ideology. Background factors combined with specific influences such as family and friends may contribute to a person's vulnerability. Similarly, radicalisation can occur through many different methods (such as social media) and settings (such as the internet). The following indicators identify factors that may suggest a young person or their family may be vulnerable to being drawn into extremism:
- Identity crisis - distance from culture and religious heritage and uncomfortable with their place in the society around them.
 - Personal crisis - family tensions, sense of isolation, adolescent low self-esteem, disassociation from existing friendship groups and becoming involved with a new and different group of friends searching for answers to questions about identity, faith and belonging.
 - Personal circumstances e.g. migration, local community tensions, events affecting Country and region of origin, alienation from UK values having a sense of grievance that is triggered by personal experience of racism or discrimination or aspects of Government policy, unmet aspirations, perceptions of injustice feeling of failure, rejection of civic life, criminality, experiences of imprisonment, poor resettlement, reintegration, previous involvement with criminal groups.

13..3. The process of radicalisation is different for every individual and can take place over an extended period or within a very short time frame. Potential indicators of radicalisation are listed below:

- Use of inappropriate language
- Possession or accessing violent extremist literature
- Behavioural changes
- The expression of extremist views
- Advocating violent actions and means
- Association with known extremists
- Articulating support for violent extremist causes or leaders
- Using extremist views to explain personal disadvantage
- Joining or seeking to join extremist organisations
- Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology

What is Channel?

13..1. Channel is a key element of the Prevent Strategy. It is a multi-agency approach to protect people at risk from radicalisation using collaboration between local authorities, statutory partners, the police, and the local community to:

- Identify individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism.
- Assess the nature and extent of that risk.
- Develop the most appropriate support plan for the individual concerned.

13..2. Any prejudice, discrimination, or extremist views, including derogatory language, displayed by learners or staff will always be challenged and where appropriate will be dealt with in line with the Student Disciplinary Policy and the Code of Conduct for staff. Staff should use their professional judgement and discuss with a Designated Safeguarding Person if they have any concerns. Once assessed, and if appropriate, this will be referred into the Channel Panel Process as per the flowchart below on the following page. Optimum Skills has an identified single point of contact (SPOC) in relation to Prevent and the Designated Safeguarding Lead and any concerns discussed with any member of the Safeguarding Team will be passed on and referred if appropriate. To ensure compliance with the Prevent duty, all staff must make sure that they:

- Undertake training in the Prevent duty as identified by Optimum Skills to ensure they understand the factors that make people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and that they are able to recognise this vulnerability and are aware of what action to take.
- Exemplify British/Community Values into their work and practice and that opportunities in the curriculum are used to promote these values to learners.

Youth Produced Sexual Imagery (Sexting)

- 13..1. Making, possessing, and distributing imagery of someone under 18, which is indecent, is illegal. This includes imagery created by under-18s themselves. The relevant legislation is contained in the Protection of Children Act 1978 (England and Wales) as amended in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales). Specifically, it is an offence to possess, distribute, show and make images of children. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 defines a child, for the purposes of indecent images, as anyone under the age of 18. The latest guidance from the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) introduces the phrase 'youth produced sexual imagery' instead of 'sexting'. (August 2016). This guidance refers to sexual imagery and not indecent imagery as indecent is subjective and has no specific definition in law. The type of incidents covered by this guidance are:
- A person under the age of 18 creates and shares sexual images of themselves with a peer under the age of 18.
 - A person under the age of 18 shares sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18 with a peer under the age of 18 or an adult.
 - A person under the age of 18 is in possession of sexual imagery created by another person under the age of 18.
- 13..2. The sharing of sexual images of people under 18 by adults constitutes child sexual abuse and this should be reported to the police.

Handling Incidents

- 1. All incidents involving youth produced sexual imagery should be reported to the Safeguarding Team.
 - 2. An initial review meeting will be held and subsequent interviews with the young people involved, if appropriate.
 - 3. Parents should be informed at an early stage and involved in the process unless there is good reason to believe that involving parents would put the young person at risk of harm.
 - 4. At any point in this process, if there is a concern that a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the police immediately.
- 13..1. An immediate referral to the police and/or children's social care will be made at this initial stage if:
- 1. The incident involves an adult.
 - 2. There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent, for example due to a learning difficulty.
 - 3. What is known about the imagery suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person's development age or are violent.

- 4. The imagery involves sexual acts and any child in the imagery is under 13.
 - 5. There is reason to believe that a young person is at risk of harm owing to the sharing of imagery, for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming.
- 13..2. If none of the above apply we may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children’s social care. Although the sharing of sexual imagery is illegal, the National Police Chief’s Council (NPCC) is clear that ‘youth produced sexual imagery should be primarily treated as safeguarding issue’ and the law was also created to protect children and young people and not to criminalise them. The decision to respond to the incident without involving the police or children’s social care will be made when the Designated Safeguarding Lead is confident that there is enough information to assess the risks to the young people involved and that the risks can be managed within pastoral support and disciplinary policy.

Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment

- 13..1. Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.
- 13..2. The information below covers children of all ages, from the primary through secondary stage and into Optimum Skills. For the purposes of this advice, a child is anyone under the age of 18. Whilst the focus of the advice is on protecting and supporting children, we will of course protect any adult learners and engage with adult social care, support services and the police as required. Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.
- 13..3. Staff should be aware of the importance of:
- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
 - not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and
 - challenging behaviours - (potentially criminal in nature) as dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Sexual Violence

- 13..1. It is important that staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as described below:

Rape

- 13..1. A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Assault by Penetration

- 13..1. A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Sexual Assault

- 13..1. A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

What is Consent?

- 13..1. Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.
- a child under the age of 13 can never consent to any sexual activity;
 - the age of consent is 16;
 - sexual intercourse without consent is rape. Sexual Harassment When referring to sexual harassment we mean 'unwanted conduct of a sexual nature' that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child's dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment. Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:
 - sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
 - sexual "jokes" or taunting;
 - physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes (Optimum Skills should be

considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and

- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.
- non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos;
- sexualised online bullying;
- unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media; and
- sexual exploitation; coercion and threats.

Upskirting

- 13..1. Upskirting typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is now a criminal offence.

14. Appendix B**Safeguarding External Contacts**

Areas	Numbers	Email
Durham		
Frist Contact	03000 267 979	Firstcontact-gcsx@durham.gcsx.gov.uk
Adult Safeguarding	03000 267 979	Safeguardingadults@durham.gov.uk
Darlington		
The Children's Access Point	01325 406222	childrensaccesspoint@darlington.gcsx
Adult Safeguarding	01325 406111	ssact@darlington.gcsx.gov.uk
Gateshead		
Gateshead Council's Children's Social Care	0191 433 2653	Aduty@gateshead.gov.uk
Adult Safeguarding	0191 433 7033	adultsocialcaredirect@gateshead.gov.uk
Hartlepool		
The Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Children's Hub	01429 284284	childrenshub@hartlepool.gov.uk
Adult Safeguarding	01429 284284	dutyteam@hartlepool.gcsx.gov.uk
Middlesbrough		
First Contact Team	01642 130700	southteesmach@redcar.cleveland.gov
Adult Safeguarding	01642 726004	socialservices@middlesbrough.gov.uk