

## **Apprenticeship Safeguarding Guide**

### **Our Approach**

The University's approach to safeguarding is set out below. The University's approach to safeguarding apprentices reflects the 2025 Safeguarding Policy framework. Central to our approach is recognition that all individuals are different, with their own needs, and that each apprentice may feel more comfortable discussing sensitive issues with different people. For this reason, it is important to set out what support is available, and where an apprentice may choose to take their concerns.

On a day-to-day basis apprentices interact mostly with their line manager, and apprenticeship skills coach, thus these roles are the obvious route for raising concerns and seeking advice and support. This document sets out the roles of each party (employer and University), helping to ensure everyone involved in supporting the delivery of apprenticeships are aware of their responsibilities, and are given one central document through which to access support when needed. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and all members of the apprenticeship partnership must act to prevent and respond to concerns. The University provides oversight, guidance, and training; employers are duty holders for workplace safety and welfare; and apprentices are encouraged to raise concerns through the proper channels.

### **What we mean by safeguarding**

Safeguarding is an overarching term used to describe the protection of the health, wellbeing, and human rights of individuals. In the context of our apprenticeship provision safeguarding means protecting children and adults at risk from abuse and neglect, making sure that they are safe and that their health and development are not impaired. The University follows statutory guidance and relevant legislation. Under legislation, all parties involved in an apprenticeship must take reasonable action to minimise risks to apprentices, placing safeguarding concerns at the heart of their training provision. This includes aspects of the apprentices' experience, both in and outside of the workplace, as well as during any attendance at university.

We refer to Ofsted's guidance when looking to provide a definition of what is meant by safeguarding obligations in an apprenticeship setting:

- 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 wellbeing.

As shown, safeguarding is not the concern of one individual or one stakeholder in the apprenticeship tripartite agreement, it is the responsibility of all. As such, apprentices should be aware of what they can expect from their different apprenticeship partners.

## **What to expect from employers**

Apprentices are entitled to expect their employer to place protection of their wellbeing as central to all operations. Employers must ensure compliance with safeguarding legislation, including the Equality Act 2010, the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and the Prevent Duty under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and any other relevant UK legislation and statutory requirements to protect their workforce.

Employers also have additional safeguarding expectations placed upon them in relation to apprentices, ensuring their welfare is considered throughout. In practice this means providing a supporting framework and working with the University and apprentice when risks or concerns have been identified.

To meet their obligations employers will:

- Familiarise themselves with relevant government legislation.
- Take appropriate steps to understand what safeguarding means in practice at their organisation, in the context of the responsibilities they have for the people they employ.
- Ensure that any staff working with apprentices in a position of trust are appropriate for the role.
- Where possible, identify a safeguarding lead person to coordinate across all apprentices.
- Attend training and utilise resources offered by the university in relation to apprenticeships

Colleagues can refer a student to the Student Wellbeing Team via the Wellbeing Webform: [Wellbeing referral form – worried about a student?, use this resource link \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

They can use this form to make a safeguarding referral or wellbeing concern by ticking the concerns relevant to the student's circumstances.

All safeguarding referrals are reviewed and responded to on the same day that the referral is made except if this is after 5pm. In this case, the referral will be reviewed, assessed, and responded to within the following working day.

## **From the University**

The University is committed to maintaining a culture of safety, inclusion, and wellbeing for all apprentices and recognises that apprentices could experience difficulties in their work, study, and personal life, thus are on hand to support them in any way we can. As such, we have a range of in-house services to support those who feel they need to access them.

To meet its obligations the University will:

- Signpost to all available services, ensuring apprentices are aware of the range of skills available to support their needs.
- Provide safeguarding and Prevent training for all University employees working with apprentices, ensuring everyone involved knows how best to offer support.
- Embed 10 minutes per progress review to focus on health, wellbeing and any other learner concerns in a confidential manner
- Maintain relationships with Local Authority and NHS (National Health Services) services for partnership approaches to ensure the wellbeing and safeguarding of apprentices.
- Regular review and update our Safeguarding procedures
- Work collaboratively with employers to ensure the necessary support is in place for the entirety of the apprenticeship programme
- To provide resources to enable apprentices and employers to understand what Safeguarding is, and why it is important to them as an apprentice, including the discussion of Safeguarding within Progress Reviews.

## **How Employers and the University work together to meet our obligations**

The obligations placed on employers and the University make it clear that no one stakeholder can act independently of the other and working in partnership is central to providing the level of support needed.

To meet our joint obligations, we will:

- Ensure apprentices have an awareness of safeguarding through open discussion and providing information on how to access support both in the workplace and at the University.
- Maintain open channels of communication between the University and employer, recognising the different roles of each in supporting apprentices, and working together to identify areas of concern

## **Special consideration for the threat of Radicalisation and Extremism (the Prevent duty)**

All universities have a legal duty to pay 'due regard to the need to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism.' It is a duty we take very seriously, ensuring we balance the need to protect vulnerable individuals, with our broader obligation to protect the University and local communities. Prevent is a safeguarding strategy, which works in a non-criminal space, to offer support and guidance to those at risk.

At the heart of our Prevent-related policies and procedures is a desire to meet our legal obligations in an equitable and transparent way. We are committed to providing the right level of support to all apprentices and staff and view our duty to prevent those

within our academic community being drawn into terrorism as a safeguarding issue.

Apprentices are part of a broader community, both at work and at the University. Understanding what the Prevent duty is forms a key part of understanding Safeguarding and helps ensure workplaces, the University and community remain safe spaces for learning.

### **The role of British Values**

Prevent is clear in the requirement to promote British Values. British Values is the term given to liberal democratic values and are those which underpin most modern democracies. These are the values which shape British society and are underpinned by the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act sets out the protected characteristics, which cover and protect all citizens as everyone has at least one characteristic: Age, Disability, Gender reassignment, Marriage and civil partnership, Race, Religion or belief, Sex, Sexual orientation.

Part of the University's approach to the Prevent duty is in promoting British values which include the rule of law, democracy, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those from other faiths and beliefs, as part of the apprenticeship programme and ensuring they are contextualised within their programme of study.

For apprentices, having an understanding of the values that make up modern Britain and being able to apply these in context to their professional and personal life is an important part of the apprenticeship.

### **What Apprentices can expect:**

From employers:

- To actively engage in any University provided training on Prevent and vulnerable individuals.
- To demonstrate a commitment to the principles that underpin the Prevent Duty.
- To know who to speak to in the University to seek specialist support if any concerns are raised.
- Demonstrate a commitment to British values.
- Adhere to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

From the University:

- Provision of relevant training to all relevant colleagues ensuring they understand the Prevent duty and its implementation.
- Have clear lines of reporting so any concerns can immediately be brought to specialist attention.
- Provide a learning environment which allows apprentices to express themselves freely, within the law.
- To promote British values throughout an apprentice's programme.

- Create opportunities for apprentices to apply their learning to relevant situations and contexts.
- Encourage apprentices to respect each other and their differences, including with regard to protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010.
- To provide resources to enable apprentices and employers to understand what Prevent and British Values mean in context, and why it is important to them as an apprentice, including the discussion of Prevent and British Values within Progress Reviews.

## **Online Safety**

Online safety is an important element of safeguarding and Prevent compliance. As such, all apprentices should be aware of the ways in which they can protect themselves online and ensure the security of their personal data.

Dangers can include bullying and abuse, revenge porn, grooming, identity theft, and viruses. Both the apprentice's employer and the University are on hand to provide support and guidance in how to behave and respond to online concerns.

### **What Apprentices can expect:**

From employers:

- Ensure apprentices are made aware of their organisational policies on using the internet and technology in the workplace.
- Understand the dangers apprentices may face using technology in the workplace and act to minimise risks.
- Communicate any concerns about safety online to the University.

### **From the University:**

- Assess how apprentices may be at risk of harm using the internet or technology.
- Provide relevant training for apprentices so that they can work safely and effectively online.
- Help apprentices to develop an objective attitude to online information and evaluate its authenticity.
- Make sure university staff are trained to identify and deal with concerns about online safety.
- Provide clear guidance on what is and is not an acceptable use of the internet at University.

## **Service guidance for Apprentices and Employers**

**Personal Tutors** - Personal Tutors are a key point of support for apprentices within their academic school. They can refer apprentices to University Support Services, if any personal issues are affecting them and have an impact on their studies. Personal Tutors have been trained in how to make appropriate referrals for safeguarding concerns. To find out more about how to access Personal Tutors, check the [Student Hub](#).

**Skills Coaches and Progress review meetings** – Progress review meetings provide an opportunity for apprentices to raise any concerns they may have with their Apprenticeships Skills Coaches or a member of the Apprenticeships Team. Where appropriate, and after discussion with the apprentice, a referral may be made to relevant services

who can offer specialist support and advice.

**How to raise a concern on the Report and Support portal** - Our [Report and Support portal](#) provides a safe way for apprentices to report any concerns to the University about unwanted or inappropriate behaviour. The portal also contains resources and articles on a wide range of safeguarding topics and support services, so that apprentices can access information independently. They can use this form to make a safeguarding referral or wellbeing concern by ticking the concerns relevant to the student's circumstances.

All safeguarding referrals are reviewed and responded to on the same day that the referral is made except if this is after 5pm. In this case, the referral will be reviewed, assessed, and responded to within the following working day.

**How to alert us to any concerns about radicalisation** - We have a legal duty to prevent vulnerable individuals from being radicalised and drawn into violent extremism. Providing the right level of support is our priority. You can read more about how we manage our obligations and how to any concerns you may have about radicalisation on our [Prevent](#) page.

### **Data Sharing**

Safeguarding data is handled in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the GDPR. Information is shared only on a need-to-know basis and, where possible, with the consent of the apprentice. If there is an imminent risk of harm, information may be shared without consent to protect the individual.

Where required, and with the consent of the apprentice, we may refer the concern on to external agencies, including but not limited to:

- National Health Services (NHS)
- Social Services
- Specialist support agencies
- SO15 (Counter Terrorism Police)

In the event a case highlights a serious threat to an individual we may make onward referrals without permission.

### **Key Contacts**

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Head of Student Support and Residential Life

Prevent Lead: Head of Student Support and Residential Life



## **How to alert us to:**

For Student safeguarding and PREVENT concerns, please contact:

[safeguarding@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:safeguarding@westminster.ac.uk)

For Student Wellbeing concerns, please contact:

[student-wellbeing@westminster.ac.uk](mailto:student-wellbeing@westminster.ac.uk)

Any concerns about unwanted and unacceptable behaviour: make a report on the Report and Support platform:

<https://reportandsupport.westminster.ac.uk/>

Emergency Response: In situations where an immediate threat is evident, reach out to the emergency services for prompt assistance.