

NCG Safeguarding Procedure

Title		NCG Safeguarding Procedure	
Policy Category	NCG Procedure		
Owner	Safeguarding Council (DSLs)		
Group Executive Lead	Executive Director Quality		
Date Written	August 2023		
Considered By	Safeguarding Council / Policy Review Council		
Approved By	Executive Board		
Date Approved	November 2023		
Equality Impact Assessment	The implementation of this procedure is not considered to have a negative impact on protected characteristics.		
Freedom of Information	This document will / will not be publicly available through the Groups Publication Scheme.		
Review Date	November 2024		
Policy Summary	A unified procedure to replace individual colleges procedures and remain compliant with legislation and guidance, specifically Keeping Children Safe in Education revision / OfS statement of expectations. This procedure sets out detail guidance for NCG staff in respect of safeguarding the Group's students.		
Applicability of Policy	Consultation Undertaken	Applicable To	
Newcastle College	Yes	Yes	
Newcastle Sixth Form	Yes	Yes	
Carlisle College	Yes	Yes	
Kidderminster College	Yes	Yes	
Lewisham College	Yes	Yes	
Southwark College	Yes	Yes	
West Lancashire College	Yes	Yes	
Professional Services	Yes	Yes	
Changes to Earlier Versions			
This update (Sep 2023)	An update to remain compliant with annual KCSIE statutory guidance and continuous improvement recommendations from Business Assurance. This version also removes extraneous information and key terms that are contained in the NCG Safeguarding Policy.		
First Publication	August 2021		
Linked Documents			
Document Title	Relevance		
NCG Safeguarding Policy	NCG-wide arrangements		
Admissions Policy / Recruitment Policy	Arrangements for safe recruitment of staff.		
Attendance Management Policy	Monitoring regular attendance of students.		
Disclosure Policy	Whistleblowing arrangements.		
Equality Strategy	Arrangement for promoting and embedding EDI into our strategic themes and aims.		
Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy	Arrangements for keeping staff, students, and visitors to the college safe and well.		

Positive Behaviour Policy	Includes the Learner Code of Conduct.
NCG Code of Conduct	Code of Conduct for staff at NCG.
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy	Makes clear the method by which leaders undertakes periodic evaluation of learner experience and welfare in their learning environment.
Unified Tutorial, Progress and Attainment Policy	Arrangements to facilitate and record the learner journey. Extends to recording of the learner journey from initial assessment, through to achievement and progression.
NCG Practice for Online Learning Policy	Sets out arrangement for delivering online learning.

Equality Impact Assessment – September 2023

	Judgement	Explanatory Note if required
EIA 1 - Does the proposed policy / procedure align with the intention of the NCG Mission and EDI Intent Statement in 2.0?	Yes	Business Critical Policy, directly related to the safety and welfare of learners at NCG.
EIA 2 - Does the proposed policy / procedure in any way impact unfairly on any protected characteristics below?		
Age	No	The statutory requirements for safeguarding are primarily aimed at younger learners (children) and adults at risk, however arrangements in this policy will support all learners.
Disability / Difficulty	No	
Gender Reassignment	No	
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No	
Race	No	
Religion or Belief	No	
Sex	No	
Sexual Orientation	No	
EIA3 - Does the proposed policy / processes contain any language / terms / references / phrasing that could cause offence to any specific groups of people or individuals?	No	
EIA4 - Does the policy / process discriminate or victimise any groups or individuals?	No	
EIA 5 - Does this policy / process positively discriminate against any group of people, or individuals?	No	
EIA 5 - Does this policy / process include any positive action to support underrepresented groups of people, or individuals?	Yes	The procedure highlights learners that may typically be deemed vulnerable and the arrangements to support.
EIA 6 - How do you know that the above is correct?	<p>This procedure has been reviewed and approved by the NCG Safeguarding Council.</p> <p>The membership of these groups is indicative of the wider population within NCG.</p>	

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	6
2.	Key Principles for the Safeguarding of Learners	7
3.	Safeguarding Definitions and Links to NCG Safeguarding Policy	8
3.1.	Definitions	8
3.2.	Types and Forms of Abuse	8
3.3.	Prevent Duty and Radicalisation	8
3.4.	Type of Risk (Concern / risk of harm / immediate danger)	9
3.5.	People Responsible for Safeguarding Young People, Adults at Risk and Prevent	9
4.	All Staff Responsibility	10
4.1.	Group Designated Safeguarding Lead / NCG Safeguarding Council	11
4.2.	College Board of Governors / Designated Board Member	11
4.3.	College Leaders	12
4.4.	Designated Staff with Responsibility for Safeguarding	12
4.5.	The College Designated Safeguarding Lead (CDSL)	12
4.6.	Designated Safeguarding Staff	13
5.	Reporting and Dealing with Safeguarding Concerns and Disclosures of Abuse	14
5.1.	Abuse Disclosed by Learner	14
5.2.	Reporting and Dealing with Concerns	16
5.3.	Reporting to DSL / DSL Safeguarding Teams (My Concern)	17
5.4.	External Agency Referrals	17
5.5.	Learners Aged 18 Years or Over NOT Defined As ‘At Risk’	17
5.6.	Learners Aged 18 Years or Over Defined As ‘At Risk’ - Consent	18
6.	Reporting and Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Members of Staff	19
6.1.	Receiving and Reporting an Allegation Against a Member of Staff	19
6.2.	Initial Action To be Taken by the DSL	20
	External	21
6.3.	Enquiries and Investigations	21
6.4.	Suspension of Staff	22
6.5.	Disciplinary Investigation	23
6.6.	Allegations Without Foundation (malicious)	24
7.	Reporting and dealing with Suspicions of Radicalisation / Extremism	25
8.	Allegations Against Other Learners	25
9.	Children who become absent from Education (become missing)	25
10.	Private Fostering	26
10.1.	14-16 School Link Students	26
11.	Learners or Applicants with Criminal Convictions	26
12.	Notifications to the College of Learner Risk	27
13.	Working with External Partners / Parents	27
13.1.	External Partners / Subcontractors	27
14.	Referral to Group Services / DfE (DSLs only)	28
15.	Informing the DfE/ESFA	28
16.	Confidentiality and Information Sharing	29
17.	Whistleblowing	29

18.	Written records / MyConcern	30
19.	Monitoring Effectiveness	30
20.	Supervision Arrangements for DSLs	30
21.	Safer Recruitment of Staff, Volunteers and Agency Staff	31
22.	Staff Training	32
23.	Training for Learners and Apprentices	33
24.	Online Safety and Remote Study / Working – Staff Guidance	33
24.1.	Keeping Safe Online	33
24.2.	Acceptable Use of Technology Policy including social media	34
24.3.	Online Lesson Delivery and the NCG Practice for Online Learning Policy	34
	Annex A – Responsibilities for the Administration of MyConcern	34
	Annex B – Links to National Guidance	37

Introductory Note from the NCG Safeguarding Council.

This procedure contains critical information – you should use it as a starting point to understand the appropriate process. However, if you have a concern about a learner, staff member, or an emerging risk. at any time, you should discuss immediately with the appropriate Designated Safeguarding lead (DSL), or appointed deputy, or member of the NCG Executive/College Leadership Team. The names of the appointed DSLs can be found on the NCG website [here](#), or <https://www.ncgrp.co.uk/guide-to-information/our-policies-and-procedures/safeguarding/>.

1. Introduction

It is essential that all young people and adults at risk are protected from abuse and have the right to access education and training, free from fear of harm and protected from mistreatment and abuse, including the risk of radicalisation. NCG has a duty to safeguard the young people, and adults receiving education and training at the College.

It is important that all young people and adults at risk are protected from abuse, including the risk of radicalisation. Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on ‘specified authorities’, which includes NCG, to comply with the *Prevent Duty Guidance: for England and Wales*.

This procedure is written in accordance with Governmental guidelines, local authority guidance and locally agreed interagency procedures. This procedure complies with and should be read in conjunction with the Department for Education statutory guidance “*Keeping Children Safe in Education*” and the NCG Safeguarding Policy. Regarding adults at risk, this procedure is in accordance with government guidance on the protection of adults considered vulnerable in the DfES / NIACE publication “*Safer Practice, Safer Learning*” (2007). With regards to radicalisation, this procedure is in accordance with the “*Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales*” (2016) and “*The Counter Terrorism and Security Act*” (2015).

The procedure is reviewed and updated annually by Designated College Safeguarding Leads, (unless an incident, any new legislation or guidance suggests the need for an interim dynamic review). It is approved by the NCG Safeguarding Council and adopted as the main procedure by college and professional services leaders and staff.

Information on safeguarding policies and procedures will be made available to learners, staff, and parents / carers on the NCG and College website.

All staff employed by the Group must follow the NCG Safeguarding Policy and NCG Safeguarding Procedure. Staff will always act in the best interests of the learner and will take the view that ‘*it could happen here; it could happen to anyone*’ and be mindful of factors that increase risk and vulnerabilities.

Staff refers to all staff in the organisation, including volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff and volunteers. College refers to all and any college which forms part of NCG.

Note the term **college** refers to the constituent parts of NCG, and **professional services** refers to those NCG centralised services, nominally located in Rye Hill House Newcastle and/or residing in college business support functions.

NCG staff refers to all staff in the organisation, including sessional workers, agency staff, subcontractor staff, and volunteers.

The term **learner** is used in its widest sense and includes all learners, whether young people aged 14-18, learners with specific high needs, apprentices, adult learners, or higher education students.

The term **DSL** is used to refer to the designated safeguarding leads at NCG. For specific reference Group Designated Safeguarding Lead (GDSL), or College Designated Safeguarding Lead (CDSL) will be used.

The term '**child on child**' abuse is used to specifically relate to young people aged 14-18. Peer on peer will refer to staff/adult learners aged 19 and above.

2. Key Principles for the Safeguarding of Learners

- Staff working with learners are in a position of trust, and the NCG Policy and NCG Procedure applies to all learners.
- All learners, whatever their age, ability, gender / sex, marital or civil partnership status, racial origin, culture and / or religious belief or sexual identity, have the right to be treated with respect, have their dignity maintained and have an entitlement to protection from mistreatment and abuse.
- All learners have the right to access learning with as much independence as is appropriate and within their capabilities, and to make choices, even if those choices involve a degree of risk (if the procedure on Risk Assessment is adhered to).
- All incidents and allegations or suspicions of abuse must be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- Staff are expected to follow the NCG Code of Conduct
- Learners are expected to follow the code of conduct within the NCG Positive Student Behaviour Policy.
- All staff should be aware that certain groups of learners may be more vulnerable to abuse or neglect. These include learners who:
 - are SEND / have Specific Educational Needs (SEN).
 - are carers.
 - are privately fostered.
 - are care experienced or have been subject to Social Services intervention.
 - are prone to non-attendance.

- have a history of going missing from home and/or care.
- show signs of being drawn into anti-social and / or criminal behaviour.
- are misusing alcohol or substance(s).
- are in family circumstances which present specific challenges for the learner.
- are showing early signs of abuse and / or neglect.
- are lesbian, gay, bi, or trans (LGBT).
- are refugees / new arrivals to the UK.

3. Safeguarding Definitions and Links to NCG Safeguarding Policy

3.1. Definitions

Please refer to NCG Safeguarding Policy sections 1.1 to 1.4 for key definitions and considerations for children, adults at risk, young learners with specialist education needs or disabilities (SEND), and young learners who are LGBT.

3.2. Types and Forms of Abuse

Please refer to NCG Safeguarding Policy section 1.5 for a list of categories to describe the different types of abuse and risk.

3.3. Prevent Duty and Radicalisation

The Prevent Duty Guidance defines radicalisation as *'the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups*. The Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on specific organisations, including colleges, to have regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. This policy seeks to put in place the requirements of the Act through a Prevent Risk Assessment – an NCG cascade policy to be adapted and implemented locally.

[The Counter Extremism Strategy 2015](#) defined **extremism** as *'the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and respect and tolerance for different faiths and beliefs.'* For the purposes of clarification, **terrorism** is the act or threat designed to influence a body or organisation through intimidation and violent action.

3.4. Type of Risk (Concern / risk of harm / immediate danger)

Responses to safeguarding issues will be assessed with reference to Local Safeguarding Board thresholds. Staff should be clear on the distinction between 'concerns' at 'risk of harm' and 'immediate danger':

Concern – where staff, learners and / or external partners have any initial concerns about the welfare of a young person or adult, they should raise those concerns with College's Designated Safeguarding Staff immediately (and most certainly within two hours). These concerns will be discussed and recorded confidentially, and internal and / or external Early Help Assessments will be considered.

Risk of Harm – where staff, learners and / or external partners believe a young person or adult is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or may pose a risk of harm to others, they should raise this with the College's Designated Safeguarding Staff immediately (and most certainly within two hours¹). These risks will be discussed and recorded confidentially, and the College Designated Safeguarding Lead will determine the next steps, which may include a referral to Children or Adult Social Care Services and / or the Police.

Immediate Danger - where staff, learners and / or external partners believe a young person or adult is in immediate danger, or a potential risk to others, they should raise this with the College's Designated Safeguarding Staff immediately within two hours. These risks will be discussed and recorded confidentially, and the College Designated Safeguarding Lead will determine the next steps, which may include a referral to Children or Adult Social Care Services and / or the police. In these instances, it may also be appropriate for any member of staff to contact the emergency services directly using 999.

3.5. People Responsible for Safeguarding Young People, Adults at Risk and Prevent

(Please see NCG Internet for current DSL and link governors. [Safeguarding | NCG \(ncgrp.co.uk\)](https://www.ncgrp.co.uk))

¹ Note this is the maximum time for the concern to be formally reported using MyConcern. It should be done immediately in all but extenuating circumstances.

4. All Staff Responsibility

NCG recognises that all members of staff, external partners and learners have a role to play in safeguarding the welfare of young people and adults and preventing their abuse.

It is the statutory responsibility of all staff to:

- Read and understand Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2023), the current NCG Staff Code of Conduct, and the most recent NCG Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
- Be aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect including Prevent, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), sexual harassment, abuse and violence, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage and private fostering.
- Be aware of the seriousness of child-on-child abuse and challenge all inappropriate behaviour, including 'banter'.
- Be 'professionally curious', particularly where there are warning signs of abuse and / or neglect.
- Ensure that they carry out their duties in accordance with the duty to safeguard all learners and protect young people and adults at risk.
- Follow policies and procedures if they are aware of, or suspect, that a young person is missing in education.
- Take prompt, appropriate action when they have concerns about a young person or adult at risk.
- Behave professionally and in accordance the NCG Staff Code of Conduct.
- Understand the parameters of their role and be aware that, under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, it is an offence for a person over the age of 18 and in a position of trust to have a sexual relationship with a person under the age of 18, even if the relationship is consensual.

It is an NCG mandatory responsibility of all staff to:

- Maintain updates to NCG online Mandatory Training
- Attend annual safeguarding refreshers.
- Behave in accordance with the NCG Staff Code of Conduct and NCG IT Usage Policy
- Record compliance with the annual update (including reading the relevant parts of KCSIE, NCG Safeguarding Policy)
- Record any changes to their DBS with a HR Business Partner or declare annually that there have been no changes.
- Understand how to log a concern using the MyConcern platform and by at least one other method (email/Teams/phone)

4.1. Group Designated Safeguarding Lead / NCG Safeguarding Council

The Group Designated Safeguarding Lead shall undertake external safeguard training with the nearest local authority (e.g., Newcastle Local Authority if based in Rye Hill). The Group DSL will be a member of the NCG Executive and will chair the NCG Safeguarding Council. College DSLs / DDSLs will attend the half-termly Council meetings, with the intention of reviewing policy, supporting successful implementation, and sharing knowledge, expertise and supporting peer supervision.

4.2. College Board of Governors / Designated Board Member

College Governors shall receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction in order that they can strategically assess that safeguarding practices at NCG are effective. Governors will receive an annual refresher delivered by the NCG DSL, and Governors are required to read and understand the applicability of KCSIE, with particular attention to parts 1 and 2. Training will include NCG's obligations under KCSIE.

There will be a nominated link governor for Safeguarding on the Corporation Board, and it is advisable that all College Boards also have Link Governors. The Governor(s) should have experience in working to safeguarding children/adults in a professional capacity, for example through their professional experience working in education, health, or local authority services. The Link Governor(s) are responsible for liaising with NCG DSL and CDSL on matters associated with safeguarding, including:

- Ensuring that the Group/College has appropriate policy and procedures in place that align with KCSIE and other statutory guidance.
- Checking alignment with local safeguarding boards, and multi-agency arrangements
- Advising on continuous improvement and reviewing efficacy of procedures and systems, including review of any NCG Business Assurance recommendations
- Gaining assurance that policy and procedures are effectively maintained.
- Working with the DSL to agree the content of annual reports.
- Supporting the DSL with non-case specific ad-hoc advice, peer support, procedural guidance, and support where applicable – particularly where the theme of concern is related to local community, or place-based concerns.
- Please note Governors are not expected to intervene on individual case work, DSLs will work to protect a learner's personal information. However, Governors are likely to have valuable advice and guidance on general themes and concerns, procedures, and continuous improvement.

4.3. College Leaders

The term college leaders applied to all members of the NCG Executive, college principalship/senior leadership teams, directors, and heads of department/services, along with the DSL. They are collectively responsible for:

- Ensuring all staff follow NCG Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.
- Physical security in all college buildings. Adequate measures / deterrents for preventing access to unauthorised personnel must be in place i.e., the provision of lanyards, CCTV, barriers, and / or security staff.

4.4. Designated Staff with Responsibility for Safeguarding

In line with the NCG Safeguarding Policy, the College has an identified College Designated College Safeguarding Lead, a College Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead, and an appropriate number of Designated Safeguarding Staff.

A list of DSL names, titles and contact details for these staff is available at [Safeguarding | NCG \(ncgrp.co.uk\)](http://Safeguarding | NCG (ncgrp.co.uk))

4.5. The College Designated Safeguarding Lead (CDSL)

The CDSL is responsible for the protection of young people and adults and is also the single point of contact (SPOC) for Safeguarding and Prevent in each College.

The post holder will be a member of the College Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and has a key duty to take the lead with raising staff awareness of issues relating to the welfare of young people and adults considered at risk / vulnerable, and the promotion of a safe environment for the young people and adults considered vulnerable who are learning within the college.

The College Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for:

- Providing training, advice, and guidance to staff to ensure adequate implementation of the NCG Policy and Procedure; ensuring that key information is clear on websites, notice boards, and college screens (as appropriate)
- Overseeing the referral of concerns in the college and triaging where required
- Referring suspected abuse or allegations to the appropriate team at the relevant Local Authority.

- Ensuring the College has the details for each Looked After Child (LAC) in college, including the name of their Social Worker and Virtual Head Teacher in the LACs local authority.
- Ensuring that parents / carers are aware that the College will make referrals to the Local Authority if there is a safeguarding concern.
- Maintaining a proper record of any child protection / adult referrals, complaints, or concerns (even where that concern does not lead to a referral).
- Ensuring that parents / carers are aware of the NCG Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.
- Liaising with the Local Safeguarding Boards and other appropriate agencies.
- Liaising with secondary schools that send pupils to the College to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made for the pupils, including the sending, and receipting of Child Protection Files.
- Liaising with employers and training organisations that receive young people or adults at risk from the College on long term placements, to ensure that appropriate safeguards are in place.
- Ensuring that the College carries out a risk assessment process for serious safeguarding disclosures and serious criminal disclosures.
- Taking lead responsibility for raising awareness within the staff of issues relating to the welfare of young people and adults at risk, and the promotion of a safe environment for the young people and adults at risk who are learning within the College.
- Ensuring that staff receive basic training in safeguarding and Prevent issues and are aware of the NCG Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.
- Reporting allegations to the Prevent Team at the relevant police force / Local Authority or via Channel.
- Providing advice and support to other staff on issues relating to the protection of young people and adults at risk.
- Advise on any cases, where a learner may pose a potential risk to others and/or any previous history/circumstances within NCG's colleges (may link to the NCG Admissions Policy).

4.6. Designated Safeguarding Staff

These designated members of staff:

- Will know how to make an appropriate referral.

- Will be able to provide advice and support to other staff on issues relating to the protection of young people and adults at risk.
- Will have the responsibility of being available to listen to young people and adults at risk.
- Will deal with individual cases, including attending case conferences and review meetings as appropriate.
- Have received the appropriate training and will receive refresher training at least every 2 years.
- Will take the wishes of young people or adults at risk into account, and, wherever possible, involve them in decision making.
- Keep accurate and secure records of concerns and referrals on the safeguarding recording system.
- Understand the assessment process for Early Help and other support mechanisms within Local Authorities (LAs).
- Have a working knowledge of how the LA conducts a Section 47 and Section 17 Case.
- Be alert to the specific needs of young people in need, SEN learners, Care Experienced learners, and Young Adult Carers.
- Understand and support the College regarding the requirements of the Prevent Duty and be able to provide advice and support to staff and learners.
- Promote and raise awareness with staff and learners about key safeguarding issues.

5. Reporting and Dealing with Safeguarding Concerns and Disclosures of Abuse

5.1. Abuse Disclosed by Learner

Assess whether anyone is at immediate risk or in danger. If a learner is in immediate danger or at risk of serious harm, for example, in a life-threatening situation:

- Call a first aider and / or ambulance if an individual requires medical attention without delay.
- Call the emergency services / police if a crime is taking place or has taken place without delay.
- Separate the alleged perpetrator and victim but only if safe to do so.

- Communicate the information to the College Designated Safeguarding Lead immediately via MyConcern.
- Lower-level concerns should be reported to Designated Safeguarding Staff immediately via MyConcern but must be reported within two hours.
- The person to whom an allegation or concern is reported must gather relevant information but must not investigate the matter.

5.1.1 Guidance for Staff receiving and reporting concerns.

Receive - Listen carefully and stay calm. Avoid asking leading questions or closed questions, instead encourage 'free narrative' without applying any pressure.

For example, use simple prompts such as 'tell me....', 'explain to me.....', 'describe to me.....'

Questions should be kept to the minimum necessary to understand what is being alleged. Care must be taken when asking, or interpreting responses to questions about the indications of abuse, or any initial conclusions, as this could influence the evidence which is put forward if there are subsequent legal proceedings. The member of staff should not ask questions about the incident/s or make any judgements.

Reassure the individual that by telling a member of staff, they have done the right thing. Treat the matter seriously and keep an open mind. Inform the young person or adult at risk that the information must be passed on, but that only to those who need to know about it and are trained will be told. Inform the learner how the matter will be reported and what may happen next (the trained college staff will most probably need to make enquiries).

Record the main points carefully. Make a written record of the information as soon as possible (with notes taken in the learner's own words). Transfer to MyConcern as soon as possible.

- The name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the learner who has allegedly been abused.
- When and where the alleged incident took place, including date and time.
- If anyone else was present.
- The free narrative account of what is alleged to have happened and any questions asked by the member of staff.
- A description of any injuries observed.
- Staff and learner details will be recorded on MyConcern.

Staff should be careful not to:

- 'Put words into the learners account' by asking leading questions.
- Investigate concerns or allegations.

- Promise that you can keep it to yourself or promise confidentiality (but you can assure them it will be shared with only trusted and trained professionals i.e., DSLs)

5.1.2 Abuse Suspected, but Not Disclosed by Learner

In this case the staff member should also report the concern using MyConcern immediately.

The member of staff may wish to discuss the concern with the DSL first who can provide advice and guidance however DSLs will ask staff to report the concern regardless so a record can be maintained. This is particularly important so that a pattern of concerns can be logged, even if only suspected.

Following discussion with the DSL appropriate action will be taken. This may include making a referral to the local Children's or Adult Social Care Services and / or Police if the DSL considers that the information given indicates that the learner or another person, including minors, may be at risk of significant harm. It may also be the case that a suspicion forms part of a wider pattern, known to external agencies or police.

Remember, the learner may not yet be ready or able to speak to you about their experiences. You should not pressure the individual to disclose but should display professional curiosity and report to the DSL via normal mechanisms. It is always better to over-report, than under-report.

5.2. Reporting and Dealing with Concerns

In many cases the DSL may conclude that the learner needs specific welfare, SEN, or emotional support, however, this may not warrant intervention by Children's or Adult's Social Care. In these cases, learners may be referred to the College services such as learning support. Learning support teams can offer a range of services such as:

- Counselling and mental health support, and access to self-help applications including FIKA.
- Behaviour management support, which may also link to the NCG Positive Student Behaviour Policy
- Welfare advice and guidance.
- Referral to internal and externally procured specialist support.

If a member of staff has significant concerns about a learner but does not believe, that they are being abused, or are at risk of immediate significant harm, they should:

- Talk to the learner about the concerns.
- Log the concern via My Concern which is the appropriate method for the DSL to consider whether the concerns about the learner should be discussed with local safeguarding professionals.

- Arrange ongoing support for the learner in conjunction with the Student Learner Team.

5.3. Reporting to DSL / DSL Safeguarding Teams (My Concern)

- Staff should report any concerns, suspicions, or disclosures of abuse as soon as possible using MyConcern. Should MyConcern be unavailable for any reason, they should contact the DSL by email, Teams, or phonenumber. Details are available on this [link](https://www.ncgrp.co.uk/guide-to-information/our-policies-and-procedures/safeguarding/) <https://www.ncgrp.co.uk/guide-to-information/our-policies-and-procedures/safeguarding/>
- If staff are uncertain or need further advice or guidance about an issue related to safeguarding, they should contact a member of the DSL Team who will offer advice and support. If in doubt, they should log the concern on MyConcern anyway.
- If the matter is serious, and if the College DSL and Team are not available for some reason, staff should contact the leadership team that is most local (either college or NCG Executive). In the unlikely event that no local DSLs, or college leaders, can be contacted, the staff member should contact one of the other NCG DSLs listed on the NCG website (preferably the NCG DSL).
- Where a learner has been found to be at physical risk on college premises, the Health and Safety Manager and the Head of Estates should be informed immediately.

5.4. External Agency Referrals

- Following triage and internal review, the DSL must report a qualifying concern to the relevant external agency immediately, and certainly within 24 hours for cases that do not involve immediate harm.
- The DSL will follow external agency procedures for reporting.
- The DSL will also establish the action that will be taken and if there is a need to inform the parents / carers of the learner/adult at risk, or any other information and stages to be undertaken. The DSL will also establish the protocols for being information of further action taken.
- Case notes will be maintained on MyConcern.
- The DSL will additionally complete the NCG external referral form to note the category, and MyConcern reference. This should be completed within 2 working days (the notification is for monitoring purposed only, and has no bearing on the safeguarding case)

5.5. Learners Aged 18 Years or Over NOT Defined As 'At Risk'

- Staff should still refer through, via MyConcern, any concerns with adults aged 18 years, including those that are not vulnerable, at risk, or in need of educational support. DSLs are best placed to decide, whether to refer

through to external agencies, including adult services, the police, and Channel.

- Alternatively, the abuse may be in the past and the learner may require direction towards a counselling agency such as counselling support, Health Services, survivors' support groups, or the NSPCC, which also works with adult survivors of abuse.

5.6. Learners Aged 18 Years or Over Defined As 'At Risk' - Consent

Referrals to Adult Social Care and / or the police for Adults at Risk should only be made with the consent of the Adult at Risk, unless obtaining consent is deemed to put them at further risk. This involves:

- Speaking to the Adult at Risk in private.
- Getting their views on what has happened and what they want to happen next.

Give them information about the safeguarding adults process and seek consent to share the information.

However, the College Designated Safeguarding Lead or College Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead should override consent if they make an assessment that the Adult at Risk does not have the mental capacity to provide informed consent, as set out by the Mental Capacity Act (2005). This act sets out 5 key principles:

1. Capacity is presumed unless proven otherwise.
2. People should be supported to make decisions.
3. The right to make unwise decisions.
4. Best interests.
5. Least restrictive intervention.

5.6.1 Mental Capacity

Mental capacity assessments are decision, and time specific. Consent should be overridden when:

- 1 Capacity is affected by threatening or coercive behaviour.
- 2 There is risk of critical harm.
- 3 The concern is in the public interest.
- 4 A serious crime has taken place.

The DSL will follow the guidance of the relevant external agency (e.g., adult safeguarding board) in circumstances where this may be relevant.

Case Notes on MyConcern will be maintained.

6. Reporting and Dealing with Allegations of Abuse Against Members of Staff

NCG recognises that an allegation of abuse made against a member of staff may occur for a variety of reasons and that the facts of the allegation may, or may not, be true. It is also recognised that hasty or ill-informed decisions in connection with a member of staff can irreparably damage an individual's reputation, confidence, and career. Therefore, allegations of abuse by a member of staff shall be handled with due sensitivity.

Note. If an allegation is made regarding a former staff member, who is no longer employed at the College, the matter will be immediately reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)/Police by the DSL.

6.1. Receiving and Reporting an Allegation Against a Member of Staff

There are several sources from which a complaint or an allegation might arise, including from:

- A learner (regardless of age)
- A parent / carer.
- A member of the public.
- A disciplinary investigation.
- Another member of staff
- A whistleblower (additional information can be found in the NCG Disclosure Policy in relation to whistleblowing activities).

The person who receives the allegation should not share this with any other colleagues other than the college principal, deputising principal, and/ DSL.

The person to whom an allegation or concern is reported must not question the learner or investigate the matter further.

They must:

- Treat the matter seriously.
- Keep an open mind and avoid asking leading questions (use phrases such as “tell me, explain to me, describe to me”).
- If the complainant is the learner, questions should be kept to the minimum necessary to understand what is being alleged. Care must be taken in asking or interpreting responses to questions about indications of abuse, as this could influence the evidence which is put forward if there are subsequent legal proceedings.
- Make a written record of the information as soon as possible (where possible in the individual's own words), which should include:
 - The name of the complainant and, where different, the name of the learner who has allegedly been abused.

- When and where the alleged incident took place, including date and time.
- Who was present.
- The account of what is alleged to have happened.
- A description of any injuries observed.
- Your name, signature, and date.
- Learner's signature if appropriate.

If an allegation, or suspicion of abuse, by a member of staff is received:

- Contact the DSL immediately to report that an allegation has been made.
- If the College's DSL/nominated deputy is not available, then contact the college principal. If all staff are unavailable, contact the NCG DSL for further guidance.

If an allegation, or suspicion of abuse, is associated with the college principal, executive principal, or DSL then:

- Contact the NCG DSL immediately to report that an allegation has been made - they will advise from there.

If an allegation or suspicion of abuse is NCG DSL, then:

- Contact the NCG Chief Executive Officer – they will advise from there.

If an allegation or suspicion of abuse is NCG CEO, then:

- Contact the NCG Chief Operation & Compliance Officer – they will advise from there.

6.2. Initial Action To be Taken by the DSL.

The DSL will usually work under the supervision of the principal to gather information by:

- Obtaining written details of the allegation, signed, and dated by the person receiving the allegation.
- Recording any other information in relation to time, dates and location of incident(s) and names of any potential witnesses.
- Recording discussions about the learner and / or member of staff, any decisions made and the reasons for those decisions.
- Countersigning and dating the written record.

It is important that the DSL, or principal, does not formally investigate the allegation at this early stage. The initial phase is one of information gathering to help decide on whether the allegation warrants further investigation.

The DSL/Principal will determine whether the allegation constitutes a 'Low-level Concern' in accordance with KCSIE. If so, the DSL will work with the HR Business Partner to take appropriate action. The allegation and subsequent action will be recorded on iTrent.

If the allegation warrants further investigation, the DSL must report an allegation to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) immediately, and within 1 working day. This may be because the staff member is alleged to have:

- behaved in a way that has harmed a young person or may have harmed a young person / adult at risk.
- possibly committed a criminal offence against or involving a young person / adult at risk.
- behaved towards a young person / adult at risk in a way that indicates they are unsuitable to work with young people / adults at risk, in connection with their employment or voluntary activity.

The DSL will also contact the Executive Principal (People) / NCG DSL to agree how to inform the member of staff against whom the allegation has been made, and to agree appropriate action pending formal investigation initiated by the LADO.

If the concern is of significant severity, and involves police investigation, it is likely that the police will advise that internal investigation is deferred to allow for criminal investigations to take priority. The DSL will ensure that they remain updated on the status of any referral.

If a concern, or an allegation requiring immediate action, is received outside normal office hours, the DSL will consult immediately (or as soon as possible) with the LADO / police / relevant agency.

In line with DfE/ESFA funding arrangements, the NCG DSL will notify the DfE Contract Lead by email if a staff member (including staff employed by subcontractors) is the subject of an investigation by the local authority / police, in response to a serious safeguarding incident.

Other potential outcomes from a referral to LADO are:

- The allegation represents inappropriate behaviour or poor practice by the member of staff and is neither a crime, nor a likely cause of significant harm to the young person or adult at risk. The matter should be addressed in accordance with the NCG staff disciplinary procedures.
- The allegation can be proven to be false.

6.3. External Enquiries and Investigations

Safeguarding enquiries by external social care agencies or the police are not to be confused with internal disciplinary enquiries by NCG; however, NCG leaders may use the outcome of external agency enquiries as part of its own procedures. For example, if the crime has been committed and a member of staff has been charged.

Safeguarding agencies, including the police, have no power to direct the Group to act in a particular way; however, NCG staff must assist the agencies with their enquiries.

The DSL/leadership team shall hold in abeyance its own internal enquiries whilst the formal police or social services investigations proceed; to do otherwise may prejudice the investigation. Any internal enquiries shall conform to the existing staff disciplinary procedures.

If there is an investigation by an external agency (e.g., the police) the principal and DSL will normally be involved in, and contribute to, the inter-agency strategy discussions. The principal/DSL is responsible for ensuring that every assistance is provided to aid the agency's enquiries. They will ensure that appropriate confidentiality is maintained in connection with the enquiries, in the interests of the member of staff about whom the allegation is made.

The principal/HR Advisor will advise the member of staff that they should consult with a representative - for example, a trade union.

Subject to objections from the police or any other investigating agency, the DSL/HR Advisor will:

- Inform the learner making the allegation, that the investigation is taking place and what the process is likely to involve.
- Ensure that the parents / carers of the learner making the allegation have been informed that the allegation has been made, and what the likely process will involve.
- Inform the member of staff against whom the allegation has been made of the fact that the investigation is taking place and what the process is likely to involve.
- Appoint separate named representatives to support both the student, and staff, member until the matter is resolved.
- Maintain records on MyConcern/iTrent as directed by the DSL.

6.4. Suspension of Staff

Suspension should not be automatic as it is not a neutral action. All options to avoid suspension should be considered prior to suspension. Suspension can only be carried out by the principal. If allegations involve the principal, suspension can only be carried out by the CEO.

Suspension may be considered at any stage of the investigation. Consideration should be given to alternatives: e.g., paid leave of absence, agreement to refrain from attending work, working from home on limited duties, a change/withdrawal from specified duties.

Suspension should only occur for a good reason. For example:

- Where a person is at risk of harm, or undue influence.
- Where the allegations are potentially sufficiently serious to justify dismissal on the grounds of gross misconduct.

- Where necessary for the good and efficient conduct of the investigation.

If suspension is being considered, the member of staff should be encouraged to seek advice - for example, from a trade union.

If the Principal considers that suspension is necessary, the member of staff shall be informed that they are suspended from duty. Written confirmation of the suspension, with reasons, shall be despatched as soon as possible - ideally within one working day.

Where a member of staff is suspended, the principal should address the following issues:

- The DSL is informed of the suspension in writing.
- The parents / carers of the learner making the allegation should be informed of the suspension; they should be asked to treat the information as confidential.
- Consideration should be given to informing the learner making the allegation of the suspension.
- Relevant senior leaders who need to know of the reason for the suspension should be informed.
- Depending on the nature of the allegation, the principal should consider with the Divisional Board Member whether a statement to the learners of the College and / or parents / carers should be made, taking due regard of the need to avoid unwelcome publicity.
- The principal shall carefully consider and review the decisions as to who is informed of the suspension and investigation. The LADO and external investigating authorities should be consulted.
- The suspended member of staff should be given appropriate support during the period of suspension. They should also be provided with information on progress and developments in the case at regular intervals by the appointed Investigating Manager.
- The suspension should remain under review in accordance with the College disciplinary procedures.

6.5. Disciplinary Investigation

The disciplinary investigation should be conducted in accordance with the NCG Staff Disciplinary Policy.

The member of staff should be informed of:

- The disciplinary charge against them.
- Their entitlement to be accompanied or represented by a trade union representative or friend.
- Where the member of staff has been suspended and no disciplinary action is to be taken, the suspension should be lifted immediately, and arrangements made for the member of staff to return to work.

- The young person / adult at risk making the allegation and / or their parents / carers should also be informed of the outcome of the investigation and proceedings. This should occur prior to the return to college of the member of staff (if suspended).
- The Principal Appointed Investigating Manager should give consideration as to what information should be made available to the general population of the College.

6.6. Allegations Without Foundation (malicious)

False allegations may be indicative of problems of abuse elsewhere. A record should be kept, and consideration given to a referral to the appropriate Local Authority Social Care Department in order that other agencies may act upon the information.

In consultation with the Appointed Investigating Manager, the Principal, or appointed DSL / HR Partner will:

- Inform the member of staff against whom the allegation is made orally and in writing that no further disciplinary or safeguarding action will be taken.
- Inform the parents / carers of the alleged victim that the allegation has been made and of the outcome.
- Where the allegation was made by a child / adult at risk other than the alleged victim, consideration should be given to informing the parents / carers of that child / adult at risk.
- Prepare a report outlining the allegation and giving reasons for the conclusion that it had no foundation and confirming that the above action had been taken.

Where it is subsequently found that an allegation was made with aforethought malice, the College will determine an appropriate course of action. This may include disciplinary action against the accuser, acceptance of a written apology (subject to agreement about future behaviour) or other such sanctions as are deemed appropriate.

Consideration for proportionate responses to perpetrators of false or unsubstantiated allegations:

- Despite the distress caused, learners who make false allegations may still be entitled to continue to receive full access to the curriculum with appropriate risk assessments and support plans in place where applicable.
- Where remaining in the same organisation as the falsely accused member of staff would be prejudicial either to the member of staff or the learner, consideration should be given to supporting the learner to identify suitable education or training opportunities elsewhere.
- Permanent exclusion should be considered only as a last resort.

7. Reporting and dealing with Suspicions of Radicalisation / Extremism

In line with our Prevent Duty it is important that all our staff and learners, regardless of age, are protected from abuse linked to the risk of radicalisation, as discussed within Section 26 of the Revised Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (2016).

Radicalisation is the process where someone has their vulnerabilities or susceptibilities exploited towards crime or terrorism or supporting terrorism – most often by a third party, who have their own agenda. The Government has defined extremism in the Prevent strategy 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”.

If there are concerns that a learner is being radicalised or where there are concerns that a learner is expressing extremist views, these concerns must be raised, in line with government Prevent Duty guidance, in the same way that any other safeguarding concern would be raised. If the College Designated Safeguarding Lead considers that the information given indicates that the learner may be at risk of radicalisation, they will make a safeguarding referral in line with the Prevent Duty guidelines.

8. Allegations Against Other Learners

In the case of an allegation or actual abuse of a child / adult at risk by a learner (child on child abuse), the DSL shall:

- Notify the Principal.
- Take the steps that they consider to be necessary to ensure the safety of the learner in question, and that of any other learner who may be at risk.
- Report the matter to the external agencies/police in line with this procedure.
- Ensure that records are maintained on MyConcern.

9. Children who become absent from Education (become missing)

If a learner aged 16-18 does not attend College, the NCG attendance Management Policy will be followed.

All learner attendance is monitored, and non-attendances, will be followed up in accordance with NCG Policy, resulting in early identification/resolution of learners at risk of going absent from education. General notes should be maintained on eTrackr in a simple format: *reason(s) for non-attendance>action(s) required from staff>action(s) required action from learner.*

Some learners may be deemed to be at higher risk – for example those with complex, or profound needs, or children who are care experienced (see NCG Safeguarding Policy for other examples).

If the learner continues to be absent for more than 20 college days (4 weeks) and staff have been unable to make satisfactory contact with the learner or guardian to

ensure resumption of attendance, the College will typically withdraw the student from the course.

At the point of withdrawal, the relevant Local Authority must be notified. A record should be made on eTrackr of the contact log and state the date of contact with the local authority, the officer contacted and means of communication (email / phone).

If the staff member has concern about the safety of the learner, a concern must be raised and passed to the DSL. If the child is judged to be at risk of harm, DSLs will seek advice and / or refer to Children's Social Care as appropriate. If the staff member believes the learner is in immediate danger, they must inform the police.

10. Private Fostering

Where a young person under the age of 16 years (under 18 years if disabled) is cared for by someone, who is not their parent or a 'close relative' for 28 days or more, this is identified as a Private Fostering arrangement². Where a member of staff becomes aware of this arrangement, they must raise this with the DSL who will report it to the relevant Local Authority. The Local Authority will ensure that the arrangements are suitable and safe for the young person.

10.1. 14-16 School Link Students

In the case of a 14-16 School Link student, the DSL will liaise with the school's DSL. The school DSL will usually make the external referral to the Local Authority; however, this must be confirmed by both parties and a record maintained on MyConcern.

11. Learners or Applicants with Criminal Convictions

If a member of staff becomes aware that a learner applicant has a criminal conviction, they should alert the DSL. The DSL will arrange for a Criminal Conviction Risk Assessment to take place to ensure the safety of other learners and the applicant.

Under no circumstances should the applicant be offered an unconditional place until this Risk Assessment has been carried out and the enrolment approved by the principal.

The DSL will conduct the risk assessment, consulting with the principal, probation service and police where appropriate. The principal, in consultation with the DSL/senior leadership team will reject / approve / approve with any appropriate conditions the applicant's enrolment.

The DSL will maintain a written record of the assessment and the outcome of these discussions on MyConcern.

² A close relative refers to a grandparent, stepparent, sibling, including half-siblings, aunt, or uncle. It does not include great-aunts or uncles, great grandparents, or cousins.

Should a member of staff become aware of an existing learner with a criminal conviction or where one is received in-year, they must notify the DSL immediately who can advise on actions to be taken whilst a risk assessment is carried out.

In the cases of learners who are studying at the College for short periods of time through Job Centre Plus / Work Programme provision, the College reserves the right to refer learners back to the host agency and share information appropriately.

12. Notifications to the College of Learner Risk

Occasionally, staff may receive external information, about an individual attending college who may present a risk to young people or adults at risk. For example, a disclosure under MAPPA (Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements). In these circumstances, the DSL will call a case conference meeting to:

- Discuss the case with the relevant professionals supporting and monitoring the individual concerned e.g., police, probation, Youth Offending Service.
- Undertake a risk assessment.
- Determine what action/s should be taken to ensure that the college fulfils its safeguarding responsibilities.
- Establish if the learner has attended any other NCG sites, and the circumstances for leaving.

13. Working with External Partners / Parents

13.1. External Partners / Subcontractors

Where NCG subcontracts to other training organisations to work with learners, the NCG Contracts Team will have responsibility for managing the contract will ensure the full on-boarding processes have been completed in line with the NCG Subcontractor Framework/Handbook. This will include assurance of:

- Safe recruitment and staff monitoring policies are in place in line with NCG Policy. For example, that all staff appointments are made subject to:
 - Satisfactory references.
 - Satisfactory Disclosure and Baring Service (DBS).
 - Prohibition from teaching checks (where appropriate).
 - All staff working with vulnerable individuals are trained in line with the NCG Policy.
 - The subcontracted organisation has best practice / policy in place to ensure the personal safety and wellbeing for vulnerable individuals.

Until DBS clearance has been received, new staff working in 'regulated' activity are not allowed to work alone without supervision with learners.

Only approved agency staff may be used, and Morgan Hunt are the primary partner for maintaining such records. Morgan Hunt will liaise with NCG HR to maintain a current DBS record.

14. Referral to Group Services / DfE (DSLs only)

College DSLs are required to inform the NCG DSL of the following referrals:

- Learner / apprentice (children and adults at risk) referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer / Children and Families or Safeguarding Adults' Duty Team / police whereby the learner is the alleged 'subject'.
- Learner / apprentice (children and adults at risk) referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer / Children and Families or Safeguarding Adults Duty Team / police whereby the learner is the alleged 'perpetrator'.
- Staff referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer / Children and Families or Safeguarding Adults Duty Team / police whereby the staff member is the alleged 'perpetrator'.

The NCG External Notification Form should be completed by authorised staff only (DSLs or safeguarding Officers) via the designated [form](#). This form requests no personal information, and simply documents the MyConcern case number. It is used only to inform the NCG DSL of the most significant case, for supervision and monitoring purposes. All information will continue to be held in MyConcern.

All correspondence will be held in the strictest confidence and will be used to by the Group DSL to monitor external referral trends, and to support with supervision where required.

If external agencies are already actively involved with the learner's case prior to enrolment, there is no need to submit the NCG External Notification Form. However periodic updates on agency progress and support (case notes) should instead be made in MyConcern.

There may be occasions where staff conscientiously refer the siblings of current enrolled students to the DSL due to emerging concerns. In these cases, there is no requirement to complete the NCG External Notification Form, unless the potential outcome will have a likely and direct impact on the enrolled student. For example, a potential intervention from the local authority/ police/ CAFCAS that would see the family's children removed from their parents/ carers, or a potential threat to the learner is apparent because of making the disclosure. A note will still be made on MyConcern, tagged to the enrolled student for wider context.

15. Informing the DfE/ESFA

In some cases, NCG is required to inform the DfE/ESFA. This includes a staff concern, a student death, or issues associated with violence/sexual violence. The NCG DSL will do so by completing the ESFA enquiry form and emailing the Group's DfE contract manager.

All case note updates will be made securely in MyConcern.

The DSL must inform the NCG DSL if the College, or one of its subcontractors is the subject of an investigation by the local authority or the police in response to a serious safeguarding incident. This will be done using the NCG External Notification Form.

The Group DSL will send a copy of the Annual Safeguarding Report to the DfE contract manager, once approved by Corporation.

16. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The issue of confidentiality in the context of safeguarding is quite complex. How a member of staff handles the situation, if a learner does not initially wish to be identified as needing protection, is crucial in making them feel safe enough to disclose their identity.

There are several things to consider, including the possible risk posed to other vulnerable individuals or children, and NCG's statutory responsibility to notify external agencies of confidential information, when justified in the interests of safeguarding.

If a learner has capacity to make informed choices and decisions, information must not be passed on to external authorities unless the learner agrees or unless the DSL is satisfied that there is a serious risk of harm to self, other learners, or the public at large.

If a learner with capacity does not wish to be named and staff are in any doubt about how to proceed, advice can be sought from the relevant external agency,

It should be noted that GDPR Regulations are not a barrier to sharing information with designated colleagues or authorities where necessary. DSLs should instead consider whether the two key tests below have been met,

1. We have a clear and documented understanding of the reason why the police/agency need the information
2. There is a lawful basis for sharing the information.

Where possible, DSLs should try to share information with consent that can be evidenced. Whilst it is always encouraged to respect the wishes of those who do not consent to having their information shared, GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018 states it is permissible to share information, without consent, if it is our judgement that there is a lawful basis to do so, such as where safety may be at risk.

17. Whistleblowing

NCG has a Whistleblowing Policy which protects staff members who wish to raise concerns about serious concerns/malpractice in the organisation. In the case of safeguarding, this may relate to a theoretical concern about dangerous or illegal activity, or widespread or systemic failure in relation to learners or the services they receive. This duty is contained with the NCG Disclosure Policy and staff should act in accordance with that policy.

Whistleblowing is very different from a complaint or a grievance. It only applies when the staff member has no vested interest and are acting as a witness to misconduct or malpractice that has been observed and/or has been unaddressed following identification. Staff are always encouraged to raise the concern with a trusted leader first – this policy would apply where they are unable to do so for some reason.

If a staff member has a personal concern/complaint, they should follow the NCG Complaints and Compliments Policy.

18. Written records / MyConcern

The DSL shall retain a confidential copy of the following on MyConcern (learners) and iTrent (staff). They should not keep sensitive and confidential information in personal drives.

- All referral forms.
- Written reports, notes and documents relating to an investigation or correspondence.
- Any other relevant material.

18.1 MyConcern

MyConcern is a specialist platform designed to securing maintain all reports, case notes, and documents relating to learner safeguarding.

All staff will have limited access to MyConcern to log concerns with the DSL.

Access rights for DSLs will be reviewed regularly, as a standing item at the Safeguarding Council.

19. Monitoring Effectiveness

Where a complaint has been made, or an allegation has been made against a member of staff, the CEO / Principal and Group / College Designated Safeguarding Lead should, at the conclusion of the investigation and any disciplinary procedures, consider whether there are any matters arising from it that could lead to the improvement of the College's procedures and / or policies, or which should be drawn to the attention of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. Consideration should also be given to the training needs of staff. The Link Governor should be suitably appraised and consulted on recommended actions.

20. Supervision Arrangements for DSLs

Supervision is provided to DSLs via the following methods:

- NCG Safeguarding Council provides a forum for sharing contextual examples and experiences.

- DSLs provide one to one support and guidance to DSLs in other colleges on request.
- Link Governors can provide one to one support and guidance to the DSL of their college using anonymised examples.
- DSL's may make external supervision arrangements for themselves, and their staff as deemed necessary.

The Group DSL will arrange a minimum of one supervision workshop per academic year. This will be face to face for preference.

21. Safer Recruitment of Staff, Volunteers and Agency Staff

NCG has in place a safer recruitment policy (Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedures). The recruitment procedures will ensure that every care is taken to ensure that young people / adults at risk are protected from unsuitable people. The recruitment procedures will apply to all staff and volunteers (*for volunteers where attendance is long term and unsupervised*) within the College who may work with young people / adults at risk. The recruitment procedures will include the following:

- The post or role will be clearly defined.
- The key selection criteria for the post or role will be identified.
- The requirement to produce documentary evidence of academic / vocational qualifications.
- Obtaining professional references.
- Verification of previous employment history.
- DBS checks.
- Use of a variety of selection techniques (e.g., qualifications, previous experience, interview, reference checks).
- Notification to the candidate if the recruitment process involved a review of publicly available online material, including open social media accounts.
- Interview panels will include at least one member who is "Safer Recruitment" trained. Group Payroll will send a periodic training status report to leaders to help maintain compliance. However, Group HR will implement checks to ensure that this requirement is met. The training required is the '[ETF Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment in the FE and Training Sector](#)' module. The training is delivered online and is free to NCG staff. This training should be updated every three years.

For NCG staff, a central record will be maintained by Group HR, a weekly exception report will be sent to the NCG DSL/relevant principals for assurance that staff are suitably cleared, or appropriate supervision arrangements are in place, via a risk assessment. The latter is to be used in exceptional circumstances only, and must be approved by the CEO, Executive Principal (People), or Principal. No other staff are cleared to make this decision.

For agency staff, the College will check that the person presenting at the College is the same person that the agency provided the vetting checks for. Recruitment and selection processes are designed to assist managers to recruit and select the best candidates for a vacancy. The College will take account of all relevant legislation. A log will be maintained.

For professional consultants, the nominated HR Business Partner or DSL will ensure that the person presenting at the College is the same person that the agency provided the vetting checks for.

Volunteers will generally undertake the same vetting checks as any other member of staff before being invited to work at the college. If a staff member wishes to 'employ' a volunteer they must complete this [form](#) from the DSL. The form will be used by NCG HR to determine the level of risk and level of DBS check required.

The facts will be reported to the Disclosure and Barring Service where the candidate:

- Has been disqualified from working with children, young people, or adults at risk.
- Has provided false information, on or in support of their application.
- Is a cause for concern about their suitability to work with children, young people, or adults at risk.

22. Staff Training

- All staff and Governors are trained to understand the risks to learners and how to respond through the NCG Safeguarding Policy and Procedure and appropriate behaviour through the NCG Code of Conduct.
- All staff are required to complete mandatory training on appointment and ensure it is kept up to date (refreshing every 3 years). A compliance record will be maintained by Group HR / Payroll / NCG DSL
- All staff will receive (at least) an annual update on statutory guidance & legislation changes (e.g., KCSIE updates), and the relevant risk to learners, through face-to-face staff training either in person, or via online streaming.
- All staff at the College must declare that they have read the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education and the NCG Safeguarding Policy update.
- Staff can be updated via, email, e-bulletins, training, briefings, and staff meetings. The updates should provide staff with the skills and knowledge they need to safeguard learners effectively.
- The NCG DSL, College DSLs, deputies and safeguarding officers will undertake external local authority update training in line with local authority guidance. They will be trained to at least Level 3 for Safeguarding Children and Adults.
- All new employees will undergo the NCG Induction Programme, which includes information regarding safeguarding responsibilities and the College Single Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.

- Recruiting managers will additionally complete the [Safeguarding and Prevent training courses - The Education and Training Foundation \(et-foundation.co.uk\)](https://www.et-foundation.co.uk)

23. Training for Learners and Apprentices

- All learners will receive training during induction on safeguarding and the likely risks to them, and their peers.
- They will receive explicit direct instruction on how to raise concerns / make referrals and seek additional support.
- The impact of this training will be tested through evaluations of teaching & learning, learner surveys, group tutorials, and learner voice activities for the purpose of assurance and continuous improvement.
- In addition to key safeguarding training, all learners should be provided with introductions to Prevent, British Values, sex, and relationship education, and what constitutes sexual violence, harassment, and abuse. The training will make clear acceptable behaviours and positive relationships.
- Local risks may vary from college to colleges, although explicit instruction must be made in relation to the dangers of organised and serious violence / gang cultures, the use of drugs and alcohol, the concealment and use of weapons, and online dangers associated with content, conduct, contact, commerce. Learners will be made aware of the NCG Student Positive Behaviour Policy, and NCG (prohibition of) Weapons, Drugs and Alcohol Policy

24. Online Safety and Remote Study / Working – Staff Guidance

24.1. Keeping Safe Online

Colleagues are additionally expected to be vigilant around harmful online material that may constitute one or more types of abuse. The period of home study resulting from the COVID outbreak in the spring and summer of 2020 has significantly increased the amount of online learning resources and platforms, hence staff are required to be aware of the risks to their learners and take steps to reduce those risks through training and education.

Additional arrangements (such as additional training, learner engagement and wellbeing monitoring and learner surveys) may be necessary in the future event of a prolonged period of home study, which will be advised to staff via the NCG website. <https://www.ncgrp.co.uk/guide-to-information/our-policies-and-procedures/safeguarding/>

General categories of online are grouped into 4Cs and include:

- Content (being exposed to illegal or harmful content – for example, pornography, fake news, racism, misogyny, self-harm, suicide, anti-Semitism, radicalisation, and extremism).

- Contact (being subjected to harmful online interaction with other users, including commercial advertising and adults posing as children).
- Conduct (personal online harm – for example, making, sending, and receiving explicit images).
- Commerce (including online gambling and gaming).

24.2. Acceptable Use of Technology Policy including social media

Staff and learners must follow the NCG IT Acceptable Use Policy. Staff must not instigate contact with or make ‘friends’ with learners from personal social media accounts.

Staff should check their online privacy settings to ensure only material that they wish to be public is shared.

Where current learners contact staff through personal social media accounts staff should inform their line manager, and if repeated attempts are made the issue must be raised with the learner through their tutor.

It is acceptable for staff to run professional college/NCG social media accounts. This must be with the knowledge of the line manager and staff are responsible for ensuring that any such accounts are maintained to a standard expected of a reputable educational organisation. Staff must pass on passwords for any college social media accounts to their line manager and email the NCG Service Desk should they leave the organisation.

Communications between learners and staff, by any method, should take place within clear and professional boundaries. All communications are required to be transparent and may be open to scrutiny.

24.3. Online Lesson Delivery and the NCG Practice for Online Learning Policy

Staff should read, understand, and follow the NCG Practice for Online Learning Policy, and NCG Code of Conduct to follow for any live lesson activities. The policy has information related to safeguarding.

This includes guidance around preventing the release of any information that inadvertently gives the location or information about a member of staff / learner should be visible. Any safeguarding concerns that become evident through online verbal or visual communication should be followed up in line with the NCG Safeguarding Policy.

Annex A – Responsibilities for the Administration of MyConcern

MyConcern is a specialist platform procured by NCG to help securely record, monitor, and report on safeguarding case work. It is a product of The Safeguarding Company.

Group LDS (Chief Data and Information Officer) will:

- Ensure that the platform is procured and renewed compliantly.
- Ensure that licences and data sharing agreements are in line with NCG policy and procedures.
- Ensure that the data held in the platform is secure, and data transfer arrangements between the ILR and platform are secure.
Undertake periodic stress tests to ensure that the system is safe and robust.
- Ensure that the platform is easily accessible for NCG Staff.

NCG DSL will:

- Act as the platform owner at NCG
- Ensure that staff are trained in the use of MyConcern, including annual refreshers.
- Review the efficacy of the platform on a regular basis.
- Work with the Safeguarding Council to periodically review the efficacy of the platform, and make recommendation for continuous improvement on reporting and management of the platform, including recommendations from Business Assurance
- Review access rights for staff who need highly trusted status.

DSLs will:

- Act as the platform owner at the college
- Implement local arrangements for staff training, including additional training for safeguarding teams.
- Receive, review, triage and categorise concerns.
- Act on the concern information as appropriate
- Maintain careful and accurate records.
- Management of periodic reviewing, filing, and closing cases
- Review the efficiency of reports for trend analysis.

Access Rights for MyConcern:

- All NCG staff will have access to MyConcern to log concerns.

Highly Trusted Status assigned to (administer rights)

- Highly trusted access will only be assigned to staff with enhanced DBS clearance to work at NCG. The Safeguarding Council will review the list as a standing agenda item.
 - NCG DSL (all instances)
 - Head of Learning Technology and Digital Learning (all instances as LDS lead for MyConcern)
 - College DSLs (college instance, but are cleared to access all colleges instances on request should this be required)
 - College Deputy DSL / Safeguarding Teams (relevant college instance only)
 - Principal / Senior Leadership Teams (relevant college instance only)
 - Other staff as deemed appropriate by the Safeguarding Council (relevant college instance only)

Annex B – Links to National Guidance

- DfE (Department of Education) guidance [Relationships and sex education \(RSE\) and health education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education)
- Serious Violence, Organised Violence, Knife Crime and County Lines [Advice to schools and colleges on gangs and youth violence - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/advice-to-schools-and-colleges-on-gangs-and-youth-violence)
- Preventing Youth Violence and Gang Involvement
- Online Safety and Remote Study / Working [Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Cyber security standards for schools and colleges - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/meeting-digital-and-technology-standards-in-schools-and-colleges)
- Prevent [Get help for radicalisation concerns - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-help-for-radicalisation-concerns)
- Higher Education –Harassment and Sexual Misconduct [Statement of expectations - Office for Students](https://www.officeforstudents.org/expectations)