



Potential powered up



Safeguarding Handbook 25/26

Safeguarding Handbook for Learners Aged 16–18 and Adults



Welcome

to the Safeguarding Handbook

Ensuring the safety of all our apprentices, learners and staff is fundamental to everything we do. It is not only about identifying anyone at risk and providing appropriate support. It is also about developing your understanding of a range of subjects related to safeguarding to support you to keep both yourself and others safe.

This handbook is going to introduce some of these important subjects and also provides useful resources and sources of support.

Leep is the overarching provider of the following 3 learning providers:

- Back to Work
- Leep Trade
- Leep Talent



safeguarding@leepgroup.com

We are one centralised team of highly experienced safeguarding professionals working across the group to ensure that our learners are kept safe and are aware of the signs of radicalisation and the Prevent duty. At induction all learners are made aware of the email address and contact details as listed above. All members of the safeguarding team have full access to all mailboxes to ensure timely intervention and support is put in place.

This handbook is available for all learners, apprentices and staff. If you raise a safeguarding concern, it will be taken seriously, handled sensitively, and shared only with those who need to know to keep you or others safe. You will be supported throughout the process.

Thank you, the safeguarding team

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Meet Your Safeguarding Team



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If you have a safeguarding concern, please get in touch with us directly through the emails shared on page 2 or if a learner through your trainer. We will provide you with the support and guidance to get you the help you need. Or if a learner you can speak directly to your trainer or coach who will contact safeguarding.

If someone is in immediate danger : Call 999
Mental Health Crisis: Call 116 123 (Samaritans)

Introduction to Safeguarding

What does safeguarding cover and why is it relevant?

Safeguarding is about keeping people safe from harm, abuse, neglect, and exploitation. It applies to all learners, including those aged 16–18 and adult learners aged 19+, and is everyone's responsibility.

Safeguarding covers a wide range of issues. Some may feel more relevant to you than others, but understanding different risks can help you keep yourself safe and support others at home, at work, or on your course.

Safeguarding and Different Ages

Safeguarding applies to learners of all ages, but support may look slightly different depending on age and circumstances.

- Learners aged 16–18

Have additional legal protections. In some situations, safeguarding concerns may need to be shared with parents, carers, or external services to help keep you safe.

- Adult learners aged 19+

Are supported in a way that respects independence and personal choice. Safeguarding focuses on listening, advice, and support, but information may be shared when needed to keep someone safe..

Regardless of age:

- You can raise safeguarding concerns about yourself or someone else
- You do not need proof to ask for help
- You will be listened to and supported

Safeguarding is about support and prevention, not getting anyone into trouble.

What safeguarding concerns might relate to

Safeguarding concerns may involve:

Abuse and harm

- Physical, emotional, sexual, or domestic abuse
- Sexual harassment and unwanted sexual behaviour
- Hate crime, discrimination, or prejudice-based abuse

Exploitation and criminal harm

- Sexual or criminal exploitation
- County lines and cuckooing
- Modern slavery or trafficking
- Radicalisation or extremist influence

Online and digital risks

- Online bullying or harassment
- Grooming and exploitation online
- Sextortion, scams, identity theft, and misuse of images
- Risks linked to social media, gaming, and messaging apps

Wellbeing and vulnerability

- Mental health difficulties, stress, or burnout
- Self-harm or suicidal thoughts
- Substance misuse
- Homelessness or unstable housing

The following pages explain these areas in more detail and include information about the support available.

Getting help and support

If you are worried about your own safety or someone else's, you can:

- Speak to your **trainer or coach**
- Contact the **Leep Group Safeguarding Team- safeguarding@leepgroup.com**

You do not need to be in crisis to ask for help. Safeguarding support is confidential, supportive, and focused on keeping people safe.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

Adult Safeguarding and Vulnerability

Safeguarding applies to adults as well as young people.

As an adult, you may be at increased risk of harm for different reasons, including:

- Mental health difficulties
- Learning disabilities or additional needs
- Substance misuse
- Financial hardship
- Domestic abuse
- Social isolation
- Homelessness or unstable housing

Adults can experience abuse, neglect, or exploitation and may feel unsure about asking for help.

Safeguarding concerns may involve:

- Abuse or neglect
- Financial exploitation
- Coercive or controlling behaviour
- Modern slavery or criminal exploitation



Inclusion and Safeguarding

Leep is committed to creating an inclusive learning environment where you feel safe, respected, and supported. Inclusion is an important part of safeguarding, because people who experience discrimination, exclusion, or unmet needs may be at greater risk of harm.

You may have different needs, experiences, or identities, including:

- Disability or additional learning needs
- Neurodiversity
- Mental health needs
- Gender identity or sexual orientation
- Cultural, religious, or ethnic background
- Socio-economic disadvantage

Safeguarding support is inclusive and accessible.

Reasonable adjustments can be made to help you:

- Access safeguarding information
- Report concerns
- Engage with support services

Discrimination, harassment, or victimisation is not tolerated. Any concerns linked to equality, inclusion, or protected characteristics will be taken seriously and may be treated as safeguarding concerns.

Further information is available in Leep's Inclusion Strategy.



Neurodiversity and Additional Needs

Neurodiversity recognises that people think, learn, and process information in different ways.

This includes conditions such as:

- Autism
- ADHD
- Dyslexia
- Learning disabilities

If you are neurodivergent or have additional needs, you may face extra challenges, such as:

- Bullying or harassment
- Feeling isolated
- Being taken advantage of
- Finding consent or boundaries harder to understand

Safeguarding support is designed to work for you. This means it will:

- Be inclusive and accessible
- Use clear communication
- Respect your individual needs
- Avoid assumptions or judgement

If you need support or adjustments:

Speak to your coach, trainer, or the safeguarding team. Help is available.



Abuse, Harassment, Hate Crime, Violence Against Women and Girls

Forms of Abuse and Harm

Abuse and harm can affect anyone. It can happen at home, online, in relationships, at work, or during learning. Safeguarding applies to all learners, regardless of age or circumstances.

Neglect

Neglect happens when someone's basic needs are not being met. This can affect your physical health, mental wellbeing, work, and learning.

Warning Signs

Someone may be experiencing abuse if they:

- Seem fearful, anxious, or withdrawn
- Have unexplained injuries or sudden behaviour changes
- Are monitored, controlled, or isolated by someone else
- Appear distressed about work, money, or relationships
- Make excuses for another person's behaviour

Example

You may be experiencing neglect if your basic needs are not being met, such as having enough food, rest, medical care, or support, and this is affecting your wellbeing, work, or learning.

Physical Abuse

Physical abuse is when someone deliberately hurts you or causes physical harm.

Warning Signs

Someone may be experiencing abuse if they:

- Seem fearful, anxious, or withdrawn
- Have unexplained injuries or sudden behaviour changes
- Are monitored, controlled, or isolated by someone else
- Appear distressed about work, money, or relationships
- Make excuses for another person's behaviour

Example

You may be experiencing physical abuse if someone is hurting you physically, or if you feel afraid of someone in your personal life or workplace and notice injuries you cannot easily explain.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse is any sexual activity or behaviour that you do not want or have not consented to.

Warning Signs

Someone may be experiencing abuse if they:

- Seem fearful, anxious, or withdrawn
- Have unexplained injuries or sudden behaviour changes
- Are monitored, controlled, or isolated by someone else
- Appear distressed about work, money, or relationships
- Make excuses for another person's behaviour

Sexual abuse can happen to anyone, regardless of age, gender, sexuality, or background. It may be carried out by:

- A partner or ex-partner
- A friend, colleague, or family member
- Someone in a position of trust or authority
- A stranger

Sexual abuse includes:

- Rape or sexual assault
- Unwanted sexual touching
- Sexual harassment
- Coercion or pressure to engage in sexual activity
- Sharing or threatening to share sexual images without consent
- Being forced or manipulated into sexual activity in exchange for money, gifts, accommodation, or favours

Sexual exploitation

Occurs when someone uses power, control, or manipulation to exploit another person sexually. This may involve grooming, financial pressure, threats, blackmail, or dependency.

Important:

Sexual abuse is never your fault. You do not need evidence to report concerns.

Example

You may be experiencing sexual abuse if someone pressures or forces you into sexual activity, touches you without consent, or makes you feel uncomfortable in a sexual way – whether this is a partner, colleague, manager, or someone else.

In simple terms, this section is about:

- Sexual abuse is any sexual activity you do not want
- Sexual exploitation involves pressure, control, or manipulation
- Abuse can happen to anyone, at any age

What to remember:

- It is never your fault
- Abuse does not have to be physical
- You do not need proof to ask for help

If this affects you or someone else:

- Contact the safeguarding team
- You can also speak to specialist support services
- You will be taken seriously

Consent and Healthy Relationships

Consent means agreeing freely to something without pressure, fear, manipulation, or control.

Consent must be:

- Freely given
- Clear and enthusiastic
- Ongoing
- Able to be withdrawn at any time

Consent applies to:

- Sexual activity
- Sharing images or videos
- Physical contact
- Relationships and communication

Consent cannot be given if someone:

- Is pressured, threatened, or coerced
- Is intoxicated or under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Feels afraid of consequences
- Lacks capacity to understand or decide

A healthy relationship should be based on:

- Mutual respect
- Trust and honesty
- Equality and boundaries
- Feeling safe to say no

Unhealthy or abusive relationships may involve controlling behaviour, jealousy, monitoring phones or social media, isolation, pressure to send images, or emotional manipulation.

Examples

You may be experiencing a lack of consent if you feel pressured to do something sexual or physical that you do not want to do, or if you feel unable to say no because you are worried about someone's reaction, your job, or your relationship.

You may be experiencing inappropriate behaviour if a colleague, manager, or someone connected to your workplace makes sexual comments, sends messages or images, or uses their position to pressure you into something you are not comfortable with.

You may be in an unhealthy or abusive relationship if someone controls who you speak to, checks your phone or social media, makes you feel jealous or guilty, or pressures you into sexual activity or sharing images.

In simple terms, this section is about:

- Consent means agreeing freely, without pressure
- Consent must be clear and can be withdrawn at any time
- Healthy relationships are based on respect and choice

What to remember:

- Feeling pressured means consent is not present
- Consent applies to images, messages, and physical contact
- Power imbalance can affect consent

If you feel unsure or uncomfortable:

- Trust your instincts
- Speak to the safeguarding team for advice

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse involves behaviour that controls, threatens, or harms your emotional wellbeing.

Warning Signs

Someone may be experiencing abuse if they:

- Seem fearful, anxious, or withdrawn
- Have unexplained injuries or sudden behaviour changes
- Are monitored, controlled, or isolated by someone else
- Appear distressed about work, money, or relationships
- Make excuses for another person's behaviour

Example

You may be experiencing emotional abuse if someone regularly criticises, threatens, controls, or makes you feel anxious, worthless, or afraid, including through messages or online contact.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse is not limited to physical violence. It can include emotional, sexual, financial, or controlling behaviour from a partner or family member.

Warning Signs

Someone may be experiencing abuse if they:

- Seem fearful, anxious, or withdrawn
- Have unexplained injuries or sudden behaviour changes
- Are monitored, controlled, or isolated by someone else
- Appear distressed about work, money, or relationships
- Make excuses for another person's behaviour

Example

You may be experiencing domestic abuse if someone you are in a relationship with controls your behaviour, finances, or communication, or makes it difficult for you to attend work or your course.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual behaviour that makes you feel uncomfortable, intimidated, or unsafe.

Warning Signs

Someone may be experiencing abuse if they:

- Seem fearful, anxious, or withdrawn
- Have unexplained injuries or sudden behaviour changes
- Are monitored, controlled, or isolated by someone else
- Appear distressed about work, money, or relationships
- Make excuses for another person's behaviour

Example

You may be experiencing sexual harassment if you receive unwanted sexual comments, messages, images, jokes, or attention at work, on your course, or online, and it makes you feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

Hate Crime and Prejudice-Based Abuse

Hate crime or prejudice-based abuse is when someone targets you because of who you are, or who they think you are.

Warning Signs

Someone may be experiencing abuse if they:

- Seem fearful, anxious, or withdrawn
- Have unexplained injuries or sudden behaviour changes
- Are monitored, controlled, or isolated by someone else
- Appear distressed about work, money, or relationships
- Make excuses for another person's behaviour

Example

You may be experiencing hate crime or prejudice-based abuse if you are targeted because of who you are, or who others think you are, such as your race, disability, religion, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Violence Against Women and Girls refers to forms of abuse that disproportionately affect women and girls. However, these behaviours can affect anyone, and safeguarding support is available to all learners.

Example

You may be affected by violence against women and girls if you experience behaviours such as stalking, sexual harassment, coercive control, or sexual violence, which can happen in relationships, workplaces, or online. These behaviours can affect anyone, and support is available to all learners.

Remember

- Abuse can affect anyone
- Safeguarding applies at any age
- Asking for help does not mean you are in trouble

In simple terms, this section is about:

- Different types of abuse and harm
- How abuse can happen at home, online, or in the workplace
- Understanding consent and healthy relationships
- Recognising when something doesn't feel right

What to remember:

- Abuse can affect anyone, at any age
- Abuse is not always physical or obvious
- Consent must be freely given and can be withdrawn
- Abuse is never your fault

If this affects you or someone else:

- You can speak to your tutor, or coach
- You can contact the safeguarding team directly
- You do not need proof to ask for help



Did you know?



Recent UK data show that abuse, harassment, and violence remain significant issues across society. Around one in ten adults experienced harassment that made them feel threatened or distressed in the last year, with higher rates among women. Sexual assault affected nearly 2% of adults in the past year, and around one in ten adults experienced domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking. Violence against women and girls accounts for almost 20% of all recorded crime. These figures highlight that safeguarding concerns can affect people of all ages and genders, and help is available for anyone who needs it

Harassment

- Around 1 in 10 adults (aged 16+) experienced harassment that made them feel upset, threatened, or distressed in the last 12 months.
- Women (13%) were almost twice as likely as men (7%) to report some form of harassment.
- Around 1 in 4 people experiencing sexual harassment reported it happening at work.

Sexual Assault & Violence

- In the year ending March 2025, an estimated 900,000 adults experienced sexual assault (including attempts) – around 1.9% of people aged 16+.
- Around 4.0% of females and 0.7% of males experienced sexual assault in that year.
- Around 15.9% of adults have experienced sexual assault in their lifetime.

Domestic Abuse, Sexual Assault & Stalking Combined

- An estimated 10.6% of adults aged 16+ were victims of one or more of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or stalking in the past year.
- This equates to around 5.1 million people in England and Wales, including 3.2 million women and 2.0 million men.

Domestic Abuse

- An estimated 3.8 million adults were victims of domestic abuse in the last year.
- Of these, more women were affected than men.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

- Violence against women and girls accounts for just under 20% of all recorded crime in England and Wales.
- Data show a large increase in police-recorded rape and sexual assault offenses over recent years.

Radicalisation and Extremist Behaviour (Prevent)

Radicalisation is the process by which a person comes to support extremist ideas or causes. Extremism can take many forms, including political, religious, or ideological beliefs that promote hatred, discrimination, or violence.

People can be radicalised gradually, and it does not always involve obvious or extreme behaviour. Radicalisation can affect both young people and adults, including learners and apprentices.

How radicalisation can happen

Radicalisation may happen:

- Through personal relationships
- Through exposure to harmful or misleading information
- Gradually, over time, often without the person realising

Increasingly, radicalisation happens **online**.

Online pathways to radicalisation

People may be targeted or influenced through:

- Social media platforms
- Online forums and video platforms
- Gaming platforms and in-game chat
- Encrypted messaging apps
- Private groups or channels

Online spaces can make it easier for individuals or groups to spread extreme views, groom vulnerable people, or normalise harmful beliefs.

Warning signs may include:

- Sudden changes in behaviour or beliefs
- Increased isolation from friends, family, or colleagues
- Expressing extreme or hateful views
- Spending excessive time on certain online platforms
- Being secretive about online activity

Extremism – What this means

Extremism refers to beliefs or actions that promote hatred, discrimination, or violence against others. These beliefs may be linked to political, religious, or ideological views.

Extremism often involves:

- Believing one group of people is superior to others
- Justifying harm, abuse, or violence
- Encouraging others to hate, exclude, or attack people
- Rejecting respect, equality, or the law

Extremist views can target people because of their:

- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Gender or gender identity
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Nationality

Radicalisation Example

You may be experiencing radicalisation if you are repeatedly exposed to messages or content that encourage you to see certain groups of people as dangerous, inferior, or to blame for problems, and you feel pressured to agree or share these views over time.

Extremism Example

You may be encountering extremism if you are encouraged to support or justify hatred, discrimination, or violence towards others because of who they are, or if someone pressures you to accept extreme beliefs or actions that make you feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

Online Context Example

You may notice radicalisation or extremism online if content, videos, memes, or group chats gradually normalise hateful views, encourage hostility towards others, or pressure you to keep conversations secret or move to private groups.

If you are worried about radicalisation or extremist behaviour, report concerns to the safeguarding team.

In simple terms, this section is about:

- How people can be influenced by extreme views
- Radicalisation often happens online
- Support is available before harm happens

If you are worried about yourself or someone else:

- Speak to the safeguarding team
- You will be supported, not judged

What to remember:

- Asking questions does not mean you are in trouble
- Concerns can be raised safely
- Early support can prevent serious harm

Exploitation

Exploitation occurs when someone takes advantage of another person for their own benefit. This may involve power, control, manipulation, or coercion.

Exploitation can affect both young people and adults, particularly those who may be vulnerable due to factors such as:

- Mental health difficulties
- Financial hardship
- Learning difficulties or disability
- Isolation or lack of support

Exploitation can happen in many forms, including criminal, sexual, or financial exploitation.

Example

You may be experiencing exploitation if someone pressures you to carry out activities you are uncomfortable with, such as moving money, drugs, or messages, or if you feel threatened, trapped, or unable to say no.

County Lines

County lines is a form of criminal exploitation where organised criminal groups use children, young people, or adults to transport drugs, money, or messages between area's

County lines exploitation can involve:

- Grooming and manipulation
- Threats, violence, or intimidation
- Debt bondage
- Pressure to travel to unfamiliar locations

People may be targeted in person or online, including through:

- Social media
- Messaging apps
- Gaming platforms

County lines can affect anyone and is a serious safeguarding concern.



Cuckooing

Cuckooing is when criminal groups take over the home of a vulnerable person and use it to carry out illegal activities, such as drug dealing.

People may be targeted because they:

- Are isolated or lonely
- Have mental health needs
- Have a learning disability
- Are experiencing financial difficulty
- Use drugs or alcohol

The person may be pressured, threatened, or manipulated into allowing criminals to use their home.

Cuckooing can affect adults as well as young people and is a form of exploitation and abuse.

Example

You may be experiencing cuckooing if someone takes over your home, or pressures you to allow others to stay there, and you feel scared, controlled, or unable to refuse.

In simple terms, this section is about:

- People being pressured or forced into crime or work
- Exploitation can affect adults and young people
- Vulnerable people are often targeted

What to remember:

- Exploitation is abuse
- Feeling trapped or scared is a warning sign
- You are not responsible for what others force you to do

If you are worried:

- Tell the safeguarding team
- Support is available to help you stay safe



Mental Health and Wellbeing

Everyone has mental health, just as everyone has physical health. Mental health can change over time and may be affected by personal circumstances, work, study, relationships, or life events.

Mental health difficulties can affect both young people and adults, including learners and apprentices.

Common factors that may affect mental wellbeing include:

- Stress at work or on a course
- Pressure to perform or meet expectations
- Financial worries
- Relationship difficulties
- Loneliness or isolation
- Major life changes or loss

For apprentices and adult learners, workplace stress, burnout, and isolation can have a significant impact on mental health, particularly when balancing work, study, and personal responsibilities.

Workplace Stress, Burnout and Isolation

Workplace stress becomes a safeguarding concern when it:

- Feels overwhelming or unmanageable
- Is ongoing without support
- Affects mental or physical health

Burnout may involve:

- Constant exhaustion
- Loss of motivation
- Feeling detached or numb
- Reduced confidence or performance

Isolation may affect learners who:

- Work remotely or alone
- Feel unsupported in the workplace
- Have limited social contact outside work

Early support can prevent problems from becoming more serious.

Suicide and Crisis Situations

Some people may experience thoughts about harming themselves or ending their life. These thoughts can be frightening and isolating, but help is available.

Warning signs may include:

- Talking about feeling hopeless or trapped
- Saying goodbye or giving away possessions
- Withdrawing from others
- Sudden changes in mood or behaviour

Talking about suicide does not put ideas into someone's head. Asking and listening can save lives.

Example

You may be struggling if work, study, or life pressures leave you feeling constantly overwhelmed, exhausted, isolated, or unable to cope. Support is available before things reach crisis point.

In simple terms, this section is about:

- Mental health affects everyone at different times
- Feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or low is common
- Some people may experience crisis or suicidal thoughts

What to remember:

- You are not weak for struggling
- Talking to someone can help
- Help is available before things reach crisis point

If this affects you or someone else:

- Speak to someone you trust
- Contact the safeguarding team
- If it feels urgent, call 116 123 (Samaritans) or 999



Eating Disorders

Eating disorders are serious mental health conditions that affect people of all ages, genders, and backgrounds.

They may involve:

- Restricting food
- Binge eating
- Purging behaviours
- Obsessive thoughts about food, weight, or exercise

Eating disorders often involve secrecy and shame, and may not be obvious.

Possible signs include:

- Changes in eating habits
- Increased anxiety around food
- Withdrawal from social situations
- Changes in mood, confidence, or energy

Recovery is possible with the right support.

Self-Harm

Self-harm is when someone intentionally hurts themselves as a way of coping with distressing thoughts or feelings.

Self-harm may include:

- Cutting or burning
- Over-exercising
- Misusing alcohol or drugs
- Disordered eating
- Risk-taking behaviour

Self-harm is often a sign that someone is struggling, not a desire for attention.



Substance Misuse

Substance misuse refers to the harmful or dependent use of alcohol, prescription medication, or drugs.

Substance misuse can:

- Increase risk of exploitation or abuse
- Impact mental and physical health
- Affect attendance, safety, and performance at work or learning

Signs may include:

- Changes in behaviour or mood
- Poor attendance or timekeeping
- Financial difficulties
- Risk-taking behaviour

Substance misuse may be a coping mechanism rather than a choice.

In simple terms, this section is about:

- Mental health affects everyone
- Work, study, and life pressures can make things harder
- Support is available before things reach crisis point

What to remember:

- You are not weak for struggling
- Asking for help is a positive step
- You do not have to cope alone

If this affects you or someone else:

- Speak to the safeguarding team

Use emergency support if needed



Online Safety & Deepfakes

Staying Safe Online

Using the internet, social media, and digital platforms is part of everyday life. While these tools can be helpful, they can also create risks.

Online harm can affect both young people and adults, including learners and apprentices, and may happen:

- At home
- At work
- While studying
- On personal or work devices

Online abuse and scams can happen to anyone and are not a sign of carelessness or fault.

Online Risks and Cybercrime

Cybercrime is when technology is used to commit crimes such as fraud, identity theft, harassment, or exploitation.

Online risks may include:

- Phishing emails or messages
- Fake websites or job offers
- Identity theft
- Financial scams
- Online harassment or stalking

Criminals may use pressure, fear, or urgency to manipulate people into acting quickly.

Sextortion

Sextortion is a form of abuse where someone pressures or blackmails another person using sexual images, videos, or messages.

This may involve:

- Being pressured to send images
- Threats to share images unless money or more content is provided
- Images obtained through hacking or deception

Sextortion can affect people of all ages and genders.

IMPORTANT!

- You are not to blame
- You are not alone
- Help is Available

Romance Scams

Romance scams occur when someone builds a relationship online in order to exploit another person emotionally or financially.

These scams may involve:

- Dating apps or social media
- Quick expressions of trust or affection
- Requests for money, gifts, or financial help
- Excuses to avoid meeting in person

Romance scams often target people who are isolated, stressed, or seeking connection.

Financial Abuse and Scams

Financial abuse is when someone controls, exploits, or steals another person's money, income, or financial resources. It can happen to people of any age and often occurs alongside emotional or domestic abuse.

Financial abuse can happen:

- In relationships or families
- In the workplace or apprenticeship setting
- Online, including social media and dating apps

Examples of financial abuse include:

- Controlling wages, benefits, or access to bank accounts
- Forcing someone to take out loans, credit, or contracts
- Taking money under threat, pressure, or manipulation
- Monitoring spending or demanding receipts
- Preventing someone from working or accessing education

Online scams and exploitation may include:

- Romance scams (building trust before asking for money)
- Fake job offers or investment opportunities
- Requests to share bank details, passwords, or verification codes
- Pressure to move money or open accounts for someone else

Warning signs:

- Sudden money problems
- Fear or anxiety around finances
- Being secretive about money
- Someone else speaking on their behalf

If this is happening:

Speak to the safeguarding team. Online scams should also be reported to Action Fraud. Support is available, and you will not be blamed.

Financial Fraud and Online Scams

Financial fraud happens when someone is tricked into giving away money, bank details, or personal information.

Examples include:

- Fake investment opportunities
- Requests to move or hold money for someone else
- Fake job offers or “easy money” schemes
- Messages pretending to be from banks or trusted organisations

If something feels rushed, secretive, or too good to be true, it may be a scam.

Deepfakes and AI-Generated Sexual Images

Deepfakes are realistic but fake images, videos, or audio created using artificial intelligence.

AI-generated images may be used to:

- Create sexual images without consent
- Spread misinformation
- Damage reputations
- Blackmail or exploit individuals

Sharing or threatening to share sexual images without consent is abuse and may be a criminal offence.

How to Protect Yourself Online

You can reduce risk by:

- Using strong, unique passwords
- Enabling two-step verification
- Keeping devices and apps updated
- Being cautious about sharing personal information
- Trusting your instincts if something feels wrong

If you make a mistake online, support is available — you will not be judged.

Online Abuse, Sextortion & Scams Example

You may be experiencing online abuse or exploitation if someone pressures you to share images, threatens to share private content, asks for money, or tries to gain your trust online for dishonest reasons.

In simple terms, this section is about:

- Staying safe online and protecting your personal information
- Scams, grooming, and image abuse can happen online
- Not everything online is real or safe

What to remember:

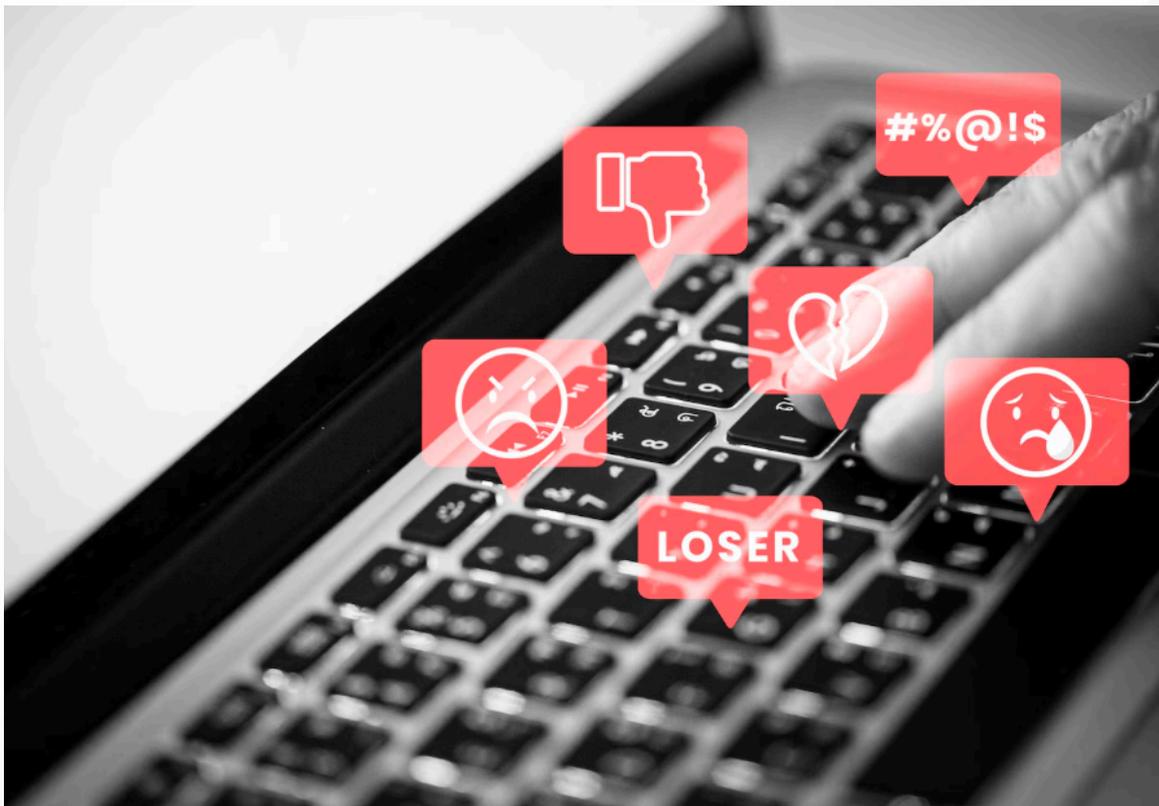
- Never feel embarrassed about being caught out
- Scams and abuse can affect anyone
- Help is available if something goes wrong

If this affects you:

- Report concerns early
- Speak to the safeguarding team or use Action Fraud

Online Abuse, Sextortion & Scams Example

You may be experiencing online abuse or exploitation if someone pressures you to share images, threatens to share private content, asks for money, or tries to gain your trust online for dishonest reasons.



Homelessness, Support and Further Resources

Homelessness and Housing Insecurity

Homelessness can affect people at any stage of life and may be linked to factors such as:

- Relationship breakdown
- Loss of employment
- Financial hardship
- Mental health difficulties
- Leaving care or unsafe accommodation

Homelessness does not only mean sleeping rough. It can also include:

- Sofa surfing
- Living in temporary or unsuitable accommodation
- Staying in overcrowded or insecure housing
- Living in vehicles, sheds, or other unsafe places

People experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity may be at increased risk of:

- Exploitation
- Abuse
- Poor mental and physical health
- Social isolation

Early support can help prevent situations from becoming worse.

Housing and Safeguarding Support

**If you are at immediate risk of harm:
Call 999**

**If you are worried about your housing situation:
Contact the Leep Group Safeguarding Team
safeguarding@leepgroup.com**

You can also speak to your trainer, tutor, or coach, who can contact safeguarding on your behalf.

Further Reading & Resources

The following organisations provide trusted information and confidential support. These links have been selected to be clear, current, and easy to access.

Sexual Abuse and Domestic Abuse Support

- Rape Crisis England & Wales
<https://rapecrisis.org.uk>
- SurvivorsUK (support for male and non-binary survivors)
<https://www.survivorsuk.org>
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline
<https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk>
☎ 0808 2000 247
- Men's Advice Line
<https://mensadviceline.org.uk>
- Galop (LGBTQ+ abuse and hate crime support)
<https://galop.org.uk>

Exploitation, Trafficking and Modern Slavery

- Crimestoppers
<https://crimestoppers-uk.org>
0800 555 111
- Stop the Traffik
<https://www.stopthetraffik.org>
- National Crime Agency
<https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk>

Mental Health and Crisis Support

- NHS 111 – Mental Health Crisis Support
<https://www.nhs.uk/urgent-mental-health>
(24/7 urgent mental health help via NHS 111)
- Samaritans
<https://www.samaritans.org>
☎ 116 123 (free, 24/7)
- Mind
<https://www.mind.org.uk>
- POPYRUS (under 35s)
<https://www.papyrus-uk.org>
- Rethink Mental Illness
<https://www.rethink.org>

Online Safety and Fraud

- Action Fraud (online scams and financial fraud)
<https://www.actionfraud.police.uk>
- National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC)
<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk>
- UK Safer Internet Centre
<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk>

Further Reading & Resources

Homelessness and Housing Support

- Shelter
- <https://www.shelter.org.uk>
- Crisis
- <https://www.crisis.org.uk>
- Local Council Housing Support
- <https://www.gov.uk/homelessness-help-from-council>

In-Work and Learning Support

- Able Futures (free mental health support for people in work)
- <https://able-futures.co.uk>

If You Are Unsure Who to Contact

If you are not sure which service is right for you:

- Speak to your trainer, tutor, or coach
- Contact the Leep Group Safeguarding Team

safeguarding@leepgroup.com

You will be listened to and supported.

Support Links

Sexual Abuse & Domestic Abuse

<https://www.survivorsuk.org>
<https://rapecrisis.org.uk>
<https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk>
<https://www.mankind.org.uk>
<https://galop.org.uk>

Mental Health & Suicide

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health>
<https://www.samaritans.org>
<https://www.mind.org.uk>
<https://www.youngminds.org.uk>
<https://www.papyrus-uk.org>

Online Safety & Cybercrime

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk>
<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk>
<https://www.actionfraud.police.uk>
<https://www.internetmatters.org>

Exploitation & Modern Slavery

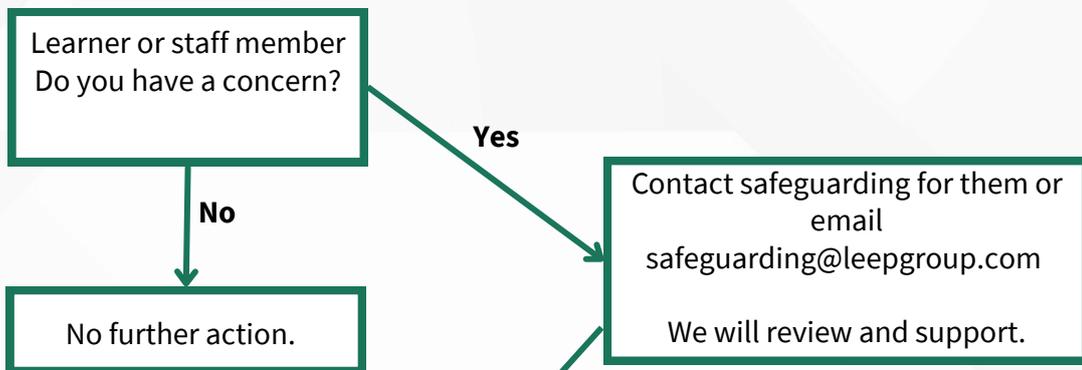
<https://www.stopthetraffic.org>
<https://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk>
<https://crimestoppers-uk.org>

Homelessness

<https://www.shelter.org.uk>
<https://www.crisis.org.uk>
<https://www.gov.uk/homelessness-help-from-council>

Leep Safeguarding Flowchart

When you self-refer or contact the Safeguarding Team to report a concern about yourself or someone else, your concern is taken seriously and handled with care, confidentiality, and professionalism. Once received, the Safeguarding Team will review the information and assess the level of risk. You may be contacted for more details to ensure a clear understanding of the situation. From there, appropriate action will be taken—this may include offering support internally, signposting to external services, or escalating to relevant authorities where necessary. The team will keep you informed throughout the process, and your safety and wellbeing will remain their priority. The flowchart below outlines each step of this process.



What happens when a safeguarding referral is made?

