



Safeguarding

Keeping Apprentices Safe

Safeguarding Apprentices In Higher Education

Why is safeguarding important for apprentice learners?

While Apprentice Learning providers are not specifically referenced in the Children's Act, they have a distinct duty to safeguard and protect under common law. This means that employers need to take steps that ensure young people and adults at risk are safe at all times while under their care. This is not restricted to just the workplace, but extends to any problems outside of it, which once identified must be acted upon.

How is safeguarding managed at the University of Wolverhampton?

Our approach

The University has a clear commitment to safeguarding, which is overseen by a dedicated Safeguarding Team. They promote and implement the Safeguarding Policy, ensuring that it is reviewed regularly and acted upon. Additionally, all members of University staff working with apprentices are trained in safeguarding and are able to access additional information, advice, support and training when appropriate.

Further information can be found on our Safeguarding website (www.wlv.ac.uk/safeguarding), this includes key staff, policies and procedures and our dedicated on line safeguarding referral form.

As the University of Opportunity, we are committed to providing a positive work and study experience where everyone feels safe, in an environment that is free from discrimination and harassment, and where our members are treated with dignity and respect. We are committed to maintain a safe and inclusive campus for all our staff, students, apprentices and visitors. We have **zero-tolerance** of any form of unlawful discrimination, prejudice, bullying and harassment, and are committed to ensuring all people are treated with dignity and respect regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. We encourage members of the University community who have experienced sexual harassment, violence, bullying or discrimination to come forward.



Our Safeguarding Pledge

The University is committed to our Safeguarding Pledge, which is to focus our minds on what our PEOPLE need:

- **P – Prioritise:** put those in distress and in need first
- **E – Encourage:** encourage help seeking
- **O – Own:** safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and everyone has a role to play in supporting and safeguarding each other
- **P – Proactive:** explore and enhance preventative practice and increase awareness
- **L – Listen:** understand and use our voice and our influence to speak up against injustice
- **E – Educate:** learn lessons, grow, and implement improvements.

Employer's duty

Employers have a duty to comply with all current and future UK legislation and statutory responsibilities. There is an expectation that an employer should take responsibility for an apprentice's welfare in the workplace and to also seek appropriate advice when they feel an apprentice may be at risk in their personal lives. We appreciate that for many organisations this can be a confusing and complex area. Please refer to the following pages, which explain the different University support provided and some of the ways you may wish to incorporate information into your current internal procedures.



What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the overarching term used to describe the protection of the health, wellbeing and human rights of individuals. Under legislation, all parties involved in an apprenticeship have to take reasonable action to minimise risks to apprentices. This includes aspects of the apprentices' experience, both in and outside of the workplace, as well as during any attendance at university. Many areas are considered to fall under the definition of safeguarding, including:

- **Abuse (emotional and physical)**
- **Domestic Violence**
- **Bullying (including online)**
- **Discrimination**
- **Forced marriage**
- **Mental health**
- **Neglect and self-harm**
- **Radicalisation and extremism safeguarding**
- **Sexual Harassment – See the University Sexual Misconduct and Harassment framework**

The University's Role

- Ensure that employers are aware of their safeguarding obligations, through guidance and training.
- Ensure apprentices have an awareness of safeguarding and understand how to access university support services.
- Provide safeguarding training for all University employees working with apprentices.
- Post holders who meet the definitions set down in legislation and government guidance will be required to comply with the relevant Disclosure and Barring Service check. This may include roles that are responsible for students aged 16 – 18, or where there are specific requirements of the field within which they work that requires a relevant check.
- Maintain open channels of communication with each employer. Apprentices may act very differently depending on their environment and may feel more comfortable discussing sensitive issues with different people.

The employer's Role

- Familiarise themselves with **relevant government legislation**
- Take appropriate steps to understand what safeguarding means in practice at their organisation, in the context of the responsibilities they have for the people they employ.
- Ensure that any staff working with apprentices in a position of trust are appropriate for the role and do not present any danger or threat.
- Ensure that any people working with young or vulnerable people have had an appropriate check completed with the Disclosure and Barring service.
- If possible, identify a person to coordinate safeguarding across an organisation and ensure that they have read and understood the University Safeguarding Policy and requirements.
- Ensure that the named person for safeguarding is identified as part of the safeguarding pre-eligibility checks.



Prevent

As part of the **Counter-Terrorism** and Security Act 2015, universities are required to pay 'due regard to the need to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism'. There is no single way of identifying a person who may be vulnerable to extremist **ideology** and it is often the culmination of a number of influences. These can include family, friends or relationships they have made online. Extremism can also include non-violent action. All apprentices studying on a programme at the University, will be expected to attend a compulsory session in which these issues will be covered.

The University's Role

- Provide relevant training for University staff so that they understand the obligations the university has under Prevent Duty and how to manage risks and concerns.
- Have clear procedures in place so that any concerns can immediately be brought to specialist attention.
- Provide a forum for apprentices to explore these matters.
- Provide a contact for any further information regarding the Prevent Duty.
- Ensure apprentices are able to express views in non-extremist ways and create an environment that encourages respectful free speech.

The employer's Role

- Demonstrate a commitment to the **principles that underpin the Prevent duty**.
- Seek specialist support if any concerns are raised.
- Identify how any concerns will be raised within your organisation and share this at the on boarding process with your account manager.



British values

An important part of Prevent, is also the promotion of British values. These are the norms that shape our society and which are enshrined in law, through legislation such as the Equality Act 2010. British values are described as:

- **Democracy**
- **The rule of law**
- **Individual liberty and mutual respect**
- **Tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs**

Apprentices are encouraged to explore ideas in a context where these values are recognised and respected.

The University's Role

- To promote British values throughout an apprentice's programme.
- Provide a dedicated programme of study which defines and explores British values and how they influence our society.
- Create opportunities for apprentices to apply their learning to relevant situations and contexts.
- Encourage apprentices to respect each other and their differences, including with regard to protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010.

The Employer's Role

- Demonstrate a commitment to British values and ensure apprentices have the opportunity to embed these values in the workplace.
- Adhere to the requirements of the **Equality Act 2010**



Staying safe online

The increasing use of the internet and digital technology has presented huge opportunities, both to enrich the learning environment for apprentices and also allowing them to expand their personal horizons. However, people are able to access and engage with online content in many ways, so they need to have the skills to be able to use the internet safely and develop appropriate online behaviours. It is paramount that people are aware of ways in which they can protect themselves online and ensure the security of their personal data.

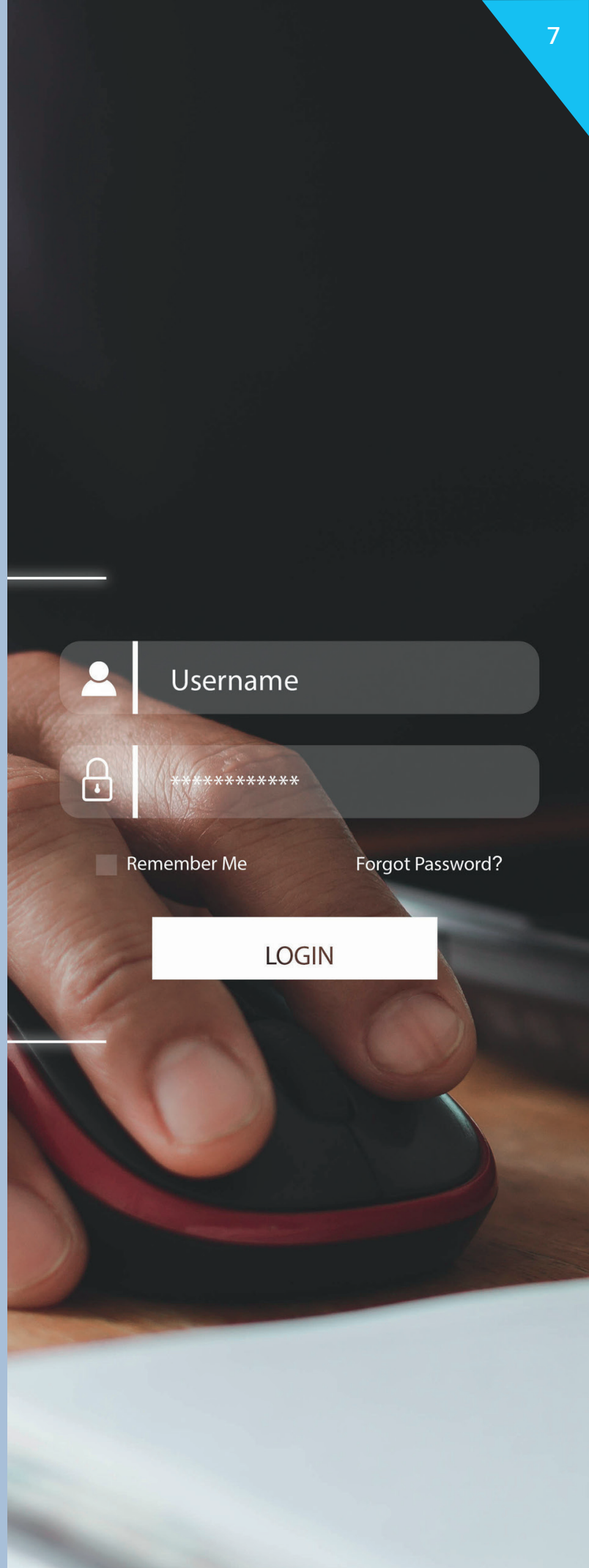
Dangers can include bullying and abuse, revenge porn, grooming, identity theft, and viruses. An important part of an apprentice's development at university is becoming a critical thinker. Developing this critical mind-set will also help apprentices to examine and appraise the validity and authenticity of information online.

The University's role

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

The Employer's role

- Ensure apprentices are made aware of your organisation's policies on using the internet and technology in the workplace.
- Understand the dangers apprentices may face using technology in the workplace and act to minimise risks.
- Communicate any concerns about safety online to the University via safeguarding@wlv.ac.uk or prevent@wlv.ac.uk



Safeguarding in practice

The University is available to you as a resource and if you find that you need support managing a particular scenario please do not hesitate to get in touch. Some apprentices may feel comfortable talking to some people about an issue and not others. So the University will endeavour to be as transparent as possible with employers, while respecting the apprentices trust and adhering to university confidentiality policies. Although a lot of safeguarding activity is proactive, we would also encourage you to have regular meetings and supervisory sessions with your apprentice so that you can act on any concerns that arise. In many cases an apprentice will not seek help over an issue of safeguarding, but there are common signs which can help you to recognise when things may be wrong. However, in an emergency or when suspecting a serious issue we recommend contacting the appropriate authorities in the first instance.

Safeguarding in practice warning signs

- **Absence - Missing work or not turning up at University**
- **Changes in appearance**
- **Changes in behaviour and character - becoming quiet or loud, aggressive or withdrawn.**
- **Changes in emotional health - crying, anxiety or low mood**
- **Excessive alcohol consumption**
- **Physical injuries - cuts or bruises**
- **Poor living conditions**
- **Self-harm**
- **Use of drugs**
- **Withdrawing from certain activities - reluctance to go online, sudden changes in use of technology.**

It is important to stress that the existence of some of these characteristics is not a definitive sign that anything is wrong.



Further support services for concerns about wellbeing and mental health

Anyone can experience mental health difficulties and it is recognised that life's transition points can be especially challenging. For example, the unfamiliar environment of higher education, combined with the demands of self-directed study can be very stressful, especially for those who already have underlying mental health problems. Therefore, the University of Wolverhampton takes the mental health of its students, apprentices, and staff very seriously.

Any of our students experiencing a mental health or wellbeing difficulty can ask for support from us and we provide free, confidential and non-judgmental support including:

- **Online self-help resources**
- **Appointments with a mental health practitioner**
- **Referrals to other support in the University and to support services in the community**

We help with a variety of personal difficulties, which include:

- **anxiety**
- **confidence**
- **depression**
- **homesickness**
- **suicidal thoughts**
- **eating disorders**
- **cultural issues**
- **identity, trauma**
- **loss/bereavement**
- **relationships**
- **work/life/study balance.**

Please familiarise yourself with our Safeguarding webpage (www.wlv.ac.uk/safeguarding) and our Student support webpage (www.wlv.ac.uk/support). These web pages outline reporting advice and processes as well as providing guidance to those who may need mental health and well-being support:



Who to contact:

Designated Safeguarding and PREVENT lead –
Samantha Waters – Chief Compliance Officer –
email: samantha.waters@wlv.ac.uk
telephone number – 07971 306715

Deputy Designated Safeguarding and PREVENT lead –
Leigh Clarke – Director of Health Safety and Resilience -
email: L.Clarke@wlv.ac.uk
telephone number - 07980 982616

Apprenticeship Team – ApprenticeshipHub2@wlv.ac.uk

Director of Apprenticeships and Higher Technical
Education – Nicky Westwood -
email: Nicky.Westwood@wlv.ac.uk

For general Safeguarding or PREVENT concerns,
please contact the following addresses:
Safeguarding@wlv.ac.uk or PREVENT@wlv.ac.uk

Plus:

- **Student support and wellbeing:**
- www.wlv.ac.uk/support
- **Mental health and wellbeing**
- www.wlv.ac.uk/mhw

