

Safeguarding, Prevent Duty and British Values

These are important aspects which may form part of your responsibility as a teacher. You have a duty of care to ensure your learners are able to learn and to achieve in a safe environment.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the term used to refer to the duties and responsibilities that those providing a health, social or education service have to carry out or perform to protect individuals and vulnerable people from harm. You will have a responsibility to adhere to, and maintain, safeguarding measures as part of your role if you work in the UK.

Following the publication of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) in the UK, a vetting and barring scheme was established in 2008. This Act created an Independent Barring Board to take all discretionary decisions on whether individuals should be barred from working with children and/or vulnerable adults. Teachers may need to have their criminal background checked via the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The purpose of the DBS is to help employers to prevent unsuitable people from working with children and vulnerable adults.

In 2006, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) in the UK produced a document called *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education*. This guidance was aimed at local authorities, schools and further education colleges in England who are responsible for promoting the welfare of children and young people up to the age of 18 (age 25 for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities). The DfES has now been replaced with the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills.

Following this, the document *Safer Practice, Safer Learning* (NIACE, 2007) was produced to provide guidance in relation to adults in further education. It recommends that safeguarding duties extend to whole-organisation policies, values and ethos, and include all staff and learners. It is therefore everyone's duty to promote the concepts of the safe learner.

The Department of Health (2000) document (in England) *No Secrets* gives a definition of vulnerable adults.

A vulnerable adult is defined as a person 'who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation'. (Department of Health, 2000 page 8)

A vulnerable adult can be put at risk of harm through a variety of actions, inadequate policies and procedures, and failures of people to act. There are six types of abuse defined by the Department of Health:

- physical
- sexual
- psychological/emotional
- financial or material
- neglect and acts of omission
- discriminatory.

A young person or adult could potentially be the victim of any of the above. It is therefore your duty to ensure that you take proper steps to safeguard your learners. If a young person or vulnerable adult discloses any abuse to you, take the disclosure seriously and never dismiss any allegation. An allegation of abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation. Asking leading questions, or attempting to investigate the allegations may cause problems for any subsequent court proceedings.

In this respect, don't make any promises regarding confidentiality, particularly if you discover something serious which will have to be reported to an authority as part of the law. Explain to your learner that you will need to report the disclosure and share the information with your organisation's Safeguarding Officer (if there is one) or the person responsible for this (you need to find out who this is at your organisation). They will, where possible, respect the wishes of the individual. However, information will need to be shared with external agencies where it is judged that a person is at risk of suffering significant harm.

Prevent Duty

The Prevent Duty is not about preventing learners from having political and religious views, but about supporting them to use any concerns in non-extremist ways, and to

prevent them from becoming radicalised. It is part of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (2015). Most educational organisations require their staff to attend a training session to ensure they are up to date with the requirements.

All learners should feel safe and they should stay within the law. There is a duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

British Values

If you work in education in Great Britain, you will need to consider how you can promote fundamental British values. If your organisation is inspected by Ofsted, they will be looking for evidence of this. However, perhaps it's not just about British values, it could be considered everyone's values.

According to Ofsted, 'fundamental British values' are:

- democracy
- the rule of law
- individual liberty
- mutual respect
- tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs, and for those without faith.

Learners will need to know about these, and to understand how they affect their role in society. They will need to know what is right and wrong, and how they should respect the law. They should also know how to accept responsibility for their actions, respect others, and understand how they can contribute to society in a positive way. If you get the opportunity, you could hold a discussion with your learners based around the values. Some curriculum areas might include the values as a specific topic.

Ways to promote the values can include:

- discussing and researching how democracy and the law works in Britain, for example, comparing it to governments in other countries
- encouraging learners to make independent choices and express their views, with the knowledge that they are in a safe, secure and supportive environment
- exploring with learners what it means to be British, and what they think the values mean

- holding discussions which give learners the opportunity to learn how to defend their points of view and respect others' views
- inviting guest speakers from different faiths and beliefs to talk to learners and answer any questions they have
- preparing learners for life and employment in a modern civilised society
- promoting democracy in action by encouraging learners to speak up, knowing they will be listened to
- using learning materials which represent all aspects of society
- enabling learners to vote for members to be on educational committees.

References

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2006) *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education* London DfES.

Department of Health (DoH) (2000) *No Secrets* London The Stationery Office

Department of Health (DoH) Home Office and Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) (1999) *Working Together to Safeguard Children* London The Stationery Office

National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (2007) *Safer Practice, Safer Learning* Ashford NIACE

Websites

Department for Education Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education (2006) - <https://tinyurl.com/ydx7a9tr>

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) - <https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/overview>

Ofsted British Values – <https://tinyurl.com/kwhrog7>

Prevent Duty online training and resources - <http://www.preventforfeandtraining.org.uk>

Prevent Strategy - <https://tinyurl.com/z8xwwut>

Safer Practice, Safer Learning - <https://www.excellencegateway.org.uk/content/import-pdf4619>

Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act - www.opsi.gov.uk/Acts/acts2006/pdf/ukpga_20060047_en.pdf